

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 1 of 88

Purpose: Acquaint the student with the causes of accidents and how to prevent them. Includes issues dealing with defensive driving, financial responsibility, and accident reporting.

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.A Traffic accidents, introduction	08.A.01 Accidents, statistics	08.A.01(1) Traffic accidents are consistently one of the top 5 causes of death in the United States. Although some accidents are unavoidable, the sad truth is that thousands of lives would be saved each year if drivers were aware of the physical, psychological, road, and weather conditions which increase accident risk and took defensive steps to insure safe driving.	
		08.A.01(2) There are between 450,000 and 500,000 traffic accidents reported annually in California alone. About 60% of these accidents involve property damage only, 39% involve injury to a passenger, driver, or pedestrian, and about 1% result in death.	CHP
		08.A.01(3) One person is killed every two and a half hours in California, and one person is injured every 2 minutes, as a result of a traffic collision.	CHP
		08.A.01(4) Although drivers under 30 years of age account for only about 23% of licensed drivers, they comprise about 35% of all drivers in fatal and injury collisions.	CHP
		08.A.01(5) Teenage drivers have total accident rates which are 4 times that of adults.	
		08.A.01(6) Traffic accidents are the leading cause of death for teenagers.	CDH: 71

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 2 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.B Traffic accidents, physical factors	08.B.01 Accidents, physical factors, introduction	08.B.01(1) As was discussed in Unit 2, there are a number of physical conditions which can affect safe driving and physical abilities which are necessary for avoiding accidents. Physical conditions which can lead to accidents include poor vision, poor hearing, illness, and fatigue.	
		08.B.02(1) Good vision is important for safe driving and avoiding accidents. You need to have good visual acuity, peripheral vision, depth perception, and glare resistance and recovery. Good vision allows you to identify potential hazards and react more quickly.	
		08.B.02(2) You should have your vision checked and wear prescription lenses as necessary to compensate for a visual deficiency.	
		08.B.02(3) You also need to keep your view unobstructed by not hanging things from your mirrors or otherwise blocking your windows, and keeping you windows and mirrors clean.	
	08.B.03 Accidents, physical factors, hearing	08.B.02(4) A number of accidents are caused by not checking blind spots. Make sure to turn your head before merging into a lane during a lane change or before making a turn.	
		08.B.03(1) Good hearing is also necessary for safe driving and avoiding accidents. Your hearing can warn you of danger such as the presence of vehicles in your blind spots.	
		08.B.03(2) Make sure to have your hearing checked periodically.	
		08.B.03(3) You should also keep your radio turned down and it is illegal to wear dual headphones while driving. Driving with at least one of your side windows open will also allow you to hear what is going on outside your vehicle better.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 3 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.B.04	Accidents, physical factors, illness	08.B.04(1) Illness can impair your ability to transmit visual and auditory information to the brain, impair the ability of the brain to act on it, impair your ability to rapidly take corrective action such as changing the direction and speed of your vehicle, and can cause you to fall asleep at the wheel.	
		08.B.04(2) Certain prescription and over-the-counter medications taken for illness, even common cold medications, can cause you to become drowsy while driving. (See Unit 10 for more detail on this topic).	
		08.B.04(3) You should be very careful if you choose to drive when you are feeling ill. You are responsible for knowing the effects of the medications you take on your driving ability. If you are ill, you should be at home resting, not driving on the roadway, particularly if you are using medications which can cause drowsiness.	
08.B.05	Accidents, physical factors, fatigue	08.B.05(1) Physical and mental fatigue increase the likelihood of accidents by affecting your vision, judgment, and reaction time.	CDH: 74
		08.B.05(2) Falling asleep is the primary collision factor in about 1% of fatal and injury collisions in California.	CHP
		08.B.05(3) Driving when you are tired is just as dangerous as driving when you have been drinking alcohol. The more tired you are, the more dangerous it is.	
		08.B.05(4) When you are tired, you are less alert. The body naturally wants to sleep at night. Most drivers are less alert at night, especially after midnight.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 4 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.B.05(5) You increase your chances of being in a collision if you are tired or fatigued because you may not see hazards early enough, or react as quickly as is necessary.	
		08.B.05(6) If you are tired, the only safe cure is to get off the road and get some sleep. If you don't, you risk your life and the lives of others.	
		08.B.05(7) A number of different suggestions to keep from getting tired on a long trip were presented in Unit 2.	
08.C Traffic accidents, psychological factors	08.C.01 Accidents, psychological factors, introduction	08.C.01(1) As was also discussed in Unit 2, avoiding accidents requires that you focus on the task of driving. Some psychological factors which can lead to accidents include: (a) being emotionally distressed or tense, (b) being distracted by personal problems or environmental conditions inside and outside your vehicle, and (c) having inadequate training and practice.	
	08.C.02 Accidents, psychological factors, emotional distress	08.C.02(1) Safe driving requires concentration. If you are preoccupied with your emotions, you will not be able to focus on the task of driving safely. Therefore, you should not drive if you are under severe tension, emotionally distressed (e.g., angry or upset), or otherwise preoccupied with your emotions or thoughts.	CDH: 75
		08.C.02(2) Heavy traffic, bad weather, and road work can cause you to become stressed, especially if you are in a hurry. Being late to work or to an appointment can also cause you to become stressed, and hence drive unsafely. If you allow yourself to become stressed, you may express your feelings inappropriately and cause an accident.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 5 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.C.03 Accidents, psychological factors, environmental distractions	08.C.03(1) Conditions inside of your vehicle, such as distracting passengers, loud music, and doing other things while driving can also cause you to drive unsafely. Driving is a complex task that requires your full attention to avoid being involved in an accident.	
	08.C.04 Accidents, psychological factors, training	08.C.04(1) Proper training through driver education and training and through practice on the road will help you to avoid accidents. You need to repeatedly practice correct responses to hazards while learning how to drive. Remember that only training and practice can overcome poor driving habits and attitudes which lead to accidents.	
	08.C.05 Accidents, psychological factors, driving under the influence	08.C.05(1) Alcohol and/or drugs are the primary collision factor in about 9% of fatal and injury accidents in California.	CHP
		08.C.05(2) Alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and over-the-counter medications can impair your (a) vision, (b) judgment, (c) and reaction time, and can result in an accident. You are risking a serious accident if you drive under the influence of alcohol or any drugs that impair your ability to safely operate a vehicle. (This topic is covered in more detail in Unit 10).	
08.D Traffic accidents, driver behavior	08.D.01 Accidents, driver behavior, introduction	08.D.01(1) Some of the more common driver behaviors which lead to accidents include: (a) driving too fast, (b) tailgating, (c) inattentiveness, (d) poor visual scanning, (e) making poor decisions, (f) improper lane changes, (g) unsafe passing, (h) failing to yield the right-of-way, (i) failure to keep right, and (j) being unable to handle a vehicle in emergency situations.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 6 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.D.01(2) The six <i>most</i> common behaviors which cause accidents are: (a) unsafe speed, (b) violation of right-of-way rules, (c) making improper turns, (d) failing to obey stop signals and signs, (e) improper lane changes, and (f) driving on the wrong side of the road.	CDH: 58 CHP
08.D.02	Accidents, driver behavior, speed	08.D.02(1) Speed is indicated as the primary collision factor about 28% of fatal and injury collisions.	CHP
		08.D.02(2) The faster that you drive, the less time you have to react to road hazards, the longer it takes for you to stop your vehicle, and the greater the impact and injuries will be if you have an accident.	
		08.D.02(3) The basic speed law in California says that no person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, traffic conditions, and the surface width of the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property.	CVC: 22350
		08.D.02(4) It is unsafe and illegal to drive faster than the posted speed limit. You should drive slower than the posted speed limit if road or weather conditions warrant doing so. However, driving too slowly can also be unsafe and cause an accident.	
		08.D.02(5) Warning speed limits on curves and freeway ramps should be obeyed at all times. These speed limits are posted to help you avoid accidents, even in ideal conditions. If the road or weather conditions are less than perfect, you should drive even slower than these recommended limits.	
		08.D.02(6) The key to avoiding accidents caused by unsafe speed is obvious: Slow down. Be aware of posted limits, road conditions, and the weather, and adjust your speed accordingly.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 7 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.D.03	Accidents, driver behavior, right-of-way	08.D.03(1) Failure to yield the right-of-way to another vehicle or pedestrian is the primary collision factor in about 20% of fatal and injury collisions in California.	CHP
		08.D.03(2) The two major mistakes that drivers make regarding right-of-way are assuming that other drivers will give them the right-of-way and failure to yield the right-of-way to others.	
		08.D.03(3) You should never assume that another driver will yield the right-of-way to you, and you should never insist on taking the right-of-way, if it will help to avoid an accident. Remember that: (a) not everyone knows the right-of-way laws, and (b) not everyone will obey the right-of-way laws. In either case, you should be prepared for other drivers to make mistakes.	
		08.D.03(4) If you are in a hurry, or otherwise emotionally distressed, it is easy to feel like you can demand the right-of-way from other drivers. This sort of unhealthy belief can lead to serious accidents.	
		08.D.03(5) Remember that you do not have the right-of-way at a YIELD sign or when entering a roadway from a side street, freeway on-ramp, driveway, or from being parked on the side of the roadway. You should yield the right-of-way to other vehicles and pedestrians already using the traffic lane.	
		08.D.03(6) In addition to other vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles also have a right to use the roadway. Be sure to look for them before making turns or lane changes.	
		08.D.03(7) Common courtesy and a non-assuming attitude are the keys to avoiding accidents caused by right-of-way violations.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 8 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.D.04	Accidents, driver behavior, turns	08.D.04(1) Making an illegal or otherwise improper turn is the primary collision factor in about 9% of fatal and injury collisions in California.	CHP
		08.D.04(2) Illegal left, right, and U-turns are dangerous. When signs and road marking prohibit these turns, it is for your safety. Failure to obey these signs and road markings can result in a serious accident.	
		08.D.04(3) Do not attempt to make a right, left, or U turn when your view, or the view of other drivers and pedestrians is obstructed, such as by parked cars, a hill or turn in the road, or by bushes or trees.	
		08.D.04(4) You must use your turn signal before making a turn. Your turn signals let other drivers know what your intentions are. You should also be aware of other drivers' signals and choose an appropriate course of action should they not follow through with their turn.	
		08.D.04(5) You need a large enough gap in traffic to be able to get up to speed before you make a right or left turn. Make sure that you have a large enough gap: (a) in oncoming traffic and (b) in traffic traveling in the lane you are going to enter to be able to turn safely.	
		08.D.04(6) When you turn left, yield the right-of-way to all vehicles on the same road coming from the opposite direction that are close enough to pose a hazard. Turn only when you can see that it is safe and make sure to look for motorcyclists and bicyclists.	CDH: 18
		08.D.04(7) When making left turns on divided highways or roadways with several lanes, watch out for vehicles coming in any lane that you must cross.	CDH: 18

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention



Page 9 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.D.05	Accidents, driver behavior, stop signs and signals	08.D.05(1) Failure to obey a stop sign or signal is the primary collision factor in about 9% of fatal and injury collisions in California.	CHP
		08.D.05(2) Stop signs and red lights mean to completely stop your vehicle behind the limit line, crosswalk, or before the intersection. Every time you stop, you should feel your body move slightly forward and then backwards. This is because you are breaking the force of inertia on your body that makes it keep moving forward even though the vehicle is slowing down. (See Unit 3 for an explanation of inertia.) If you do not feel yourself move backwards against your seat, you have not stopped completely.	
		08.D.05(3) Intersections are the most common place where accidents occur in urban areas. Because vehicles moving in different directions of travel meet at intersections and because pedestrians are often present, they are very dangerous.	
		08.D.05(4) Remember that you should stop at a yellow signal light, if you can do so safely.	
08.D.06	Accidents, driver behavior, lane changes	08.D.06(1) Improper lane changes are the primary collision factor in about 4% of fatal and injury accidents in California.	CHP
		08.D.06(2) When you change lanes, you have to do more than just signal and check your mirrors. You must also turn your head and look into the lane that you want to enter. Remember that you have blind spots which limit your ability to see vehicles to the sides of you. A number of side swipe accidents are caused by drivers not checking their blind spots before merging into another lane.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 10 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.D.06(3) You must yield to vehicles that are already in the lane you want to enter. They do not "have" to make room for you to merge, and you should never assume that they will.	
		08.D.06(4) You should avoid making last minute lane changes to catch an exit or be able to make a turn. Plan ahead and make your lane change(s) well in advance to avoid causing an accident.	
		08.D.06(5) When you are making a lane change, do not forget to keep an eye on traffic in front of you and behind you in the lane that you are driving in. If you are not paying attention to traffic in your lane, you may rear-end the vehicle in front of you, or hit other vehicles also trying to enter the lane you want to enter. Be aware of other vehicles which may be trying to enter the same lane as you.	
		08.D.06(6) Do not cross over multiple lanes or over solid white lines when making a lane change. It is both dangerous and illegal.	
08.D.07	Accidents, driver behavior, lane choice	08.D.07(1) Believe it or not, driving on the wrong side of the road is a major cause of accidents. Driving on the wrong side of the road is the primary collision factor in about 4% of fatal and injury collisions in California.	CHP
		08.D.07(2) Driving on the wrong side of the road results most often in head-on crashes, which are the most dangerous type of all accidents. The force of both vehicles must be dissipated instantly, which results in the most damage to you and your vehicle. You should be very careful to avoid these types of accidents.	
		08.D.07(3) The most common mistakes that lead to head-on collisions from driving on the wrong side of the road are turning right or left into oncoming traffic, driving the wrong way on a one-way street, and unsafe passing.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
 	08.D.07(4)	You should be able to determine whether you are on the wrong side of the road by the color of the lines painted on the pavement. If there is a yellow line on your right or if there is not one on your left, you are on the wrong side of the road.	
	08.D.07(5)	Look for WRONG WAY and DO NOT ENTER signs when making left and right turns into traffic. These signs warn you that you are driving towards oncoming traffic.	
	08.D.07(6)	One place where people often drive on the wrong side of the road is on one-way streets. Before you turn onto a street, you should look for ONE WAY traffic signs which warn you of the direction that traffic on the road travels.	
	08.D.07(7)	When you turn on a road, you should also look for the way that parked cars are facing and to see whether there is a yellow line in the middle of the road. If all lanes are divided by white lines, you should be especially careful to ensure that traffic is traveling in the direction that you think. Be especially careful when driving in metropolitan areas that you are unfamiliar with.	
	08.D.07(8)	Passing other vehicles on two-lane roads is another situation in which you will find yourself driving on the wrong side of the road. Before attempting to pass, you need to make sure that: (a) passing is not prohibited by a sign or pavement marking, (b) your view of oncoming traffic is not obstructed by a turn, hill, or object, and (c) you have enough space in oncoming traffic to pass the other vehicle safely. Passing several cars at one time is particularly dangerous.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 12 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.D.07(9) Given the choice between two or more lanes of travel in your direction on an undivided highway, it is safest to choose the lane that is not right next to oncoming traffic. If a drunk or fatigued driver swerves into oncoming traffic, you will have more time to react if you are not driving in the lane closest to oncoming traffic.	
		08.D.07(10) To avoid accidents by driving on the wrong side of the road, you need to be aware of signs and pavement markings, and make sure that you have adequate space to pass safely.	
08.D.08	Accidents, driver behavior, following distance	08.D.08(1) Tailgating is indicated as the primary collision factor in about 3% of all fatal and injury accidents in California.	CHP
		08.D.08(2) If you are following another vehicle too closely (tailgating) you are not able to see hazards ahead of you as easily, and have less time to stop or slow down before you will rear-end the driver ahead of you in an emergency situation.	
		08.D.08(3) Tailgating is particularly hazardous on freeways because vehicles are usually traveling faster and other drivers slow down needlessly to look at broken-down vehicles and other scenes, which is called rubbernecking. Rubbernecking and tailgating are a dangerous mix which lead to rear-end accidents.	
		08.D.08(4) You need enough space in front of your vehicle to be able to stop safely. You should always keep a minimum of a 3-second gap in front of your vehicle. To do so, pick a fixed object on the roadway such as a sign or pavement marking and count the seconds from when the vehicle ahead of you passes the object to when you reach the object. If it is not at least 3 seconds, you need to slow down and increase your following distance.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 13 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.D.08(5) In some situations you should have an even larger gap of space in front of your vehicle, because a 3-second gap is not large enough for you to be able to stop safely. When following a motor cycle or large truck, for example, you should give yourself at least a 4-second cushion of space in front of your vehicle.	
		08.D.08(6) You should also give yourself more than a 3-second cushion of space in front of your vehicle if the road surface or weather is poor, and when you are near a place where pedestrians or vehicles may enter the road such as near schools, playgrounds, business districts, and shopping centers.	
		08.D.08(7) It is rarely a bad idea to give yourself even more than 3- or 4-second gap of space in front of your vehicle. For example, when you are stuck in freeway traffic, you will find that you need to completely stop your vehicle less often if you keep an even larger cushion of space in front of your vehicle. This saves wear on both your brakes and your clutch.	
08.D.09	Accidents, driver behavior, passing	08.D.09(1) Unsafe passing is the primary collision factor in about 1% of fatal and injury accidents in California.	CHP
		08.D.09(2) When you pass another vehicle on a two-lane road, you must drive in the lane of oncoming traffic. As was indicated earlier, this is extremely dangerous because it can result in deadly head-on collisions.	
		08.D.09(3) You must determine whether it is both safe and legal to pass the vehicle ahead of you before attempting to do so. Do not attempt to pass another driver when your view of the upcoming roadway is obstructed, and do not take unnecessary risks. If you are not sure whether you have enough time to pass the vehicle ahead of you before oncoming traffic is near, do not attempt to pass.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 14 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.D.09(4) If possible, wait for a designated passing lane or for the slower-moving vehicle ahead of you to use a turn-out area.	
		08.D.09(5) If you are being passed, be courteous to the driver passing you. Do not speed up in your lane when you are being passed or swerve your vehicle to annoy the passer. Drive near the right edge of your roadway to assist the other driver and either maintain a constant speed, or slow down slightly.	
		08.D.09(6) Accidents are particularly likely if you pass a vehicle ahead of you that you find annoying, such as when a slow moving vehicle refuses to use a turn-out lane or speeds up during passing lanes.	
		08.D.09(7) Do not let your emotions cause you to do something unsafe such as suddenly pulling into oncoming traffic or attempting an unsafe maneuver. Think and plan before you attempt to pass another vehicle. You are not going to get to your destination any faster if you are killed or injured.	
08.D.10	Accidents, driver behavior, lane position and choice	08.D.10(1) Fewer things are more annoying than having a driver in front of you hog the road. Road hogs take two different forms: (a) those who swerve from side to side within their lane, or drive too closely to the dividing lines between lanes, and (b) those who will not pull to the right or use a turn-out lane to let you pass.	
		08.D.10(2) Failing to keep to the right or hogging the road can lead to aggressive and dangerous behavior on the part of other drivers who are stuck driving behind you.	
		08.D.10(3) If another driver wants to pass you, be courteous and let them do so. Do not speed up during passing lanes, and use turn-out lanes so that others may pass you safely.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 15 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.D.10(4) If a slow-moving vehicle in front of you refuses to pull into a turn-out lane or otherwise will not let you pass, try to control your anger. Do not honk your horn or pull close to the other vehicle's back bumper, or otherwise submit to road rage. Pull back and give the driver a lot of space.	
		08.D.10(5) If you are driving too close to the left or right side of your lane, other drivers traveling in your direction will not feel like they have enough room or otherwise feel safe passing you. If you are swerving from side to side in your lane, drivers may pull partially into the oncoming traffic lane in an attempt to pass you, which can cause a dangerous head-on collision.	
		08.D.10(6) Try to drive in the center of your lane. This gives you a side-to-side space cushion which allows you more time to react to hazards such as swerving vehicles. If you cannot keep a stable position within your lane, you probably should not be driving.	
		08.D.10(7) If you encounter a driver who is driving from side-to-side or hugging a lane divider line, give the driver a lot of space. The person may be drunk or otherwise preoccupied.	
08.D.11	Accidents, driver behavior, attention level	08.D.11(1) If you take your eyes off the road or lose your concentration for just a second, you could find yourself involved in an accident. One second not looking at the road means one fewer second that you have to react to emergency situations.	
		08.D.11(2) To avoid being distracted while driving, do not play your radio too loudly or take your eyes off the road when changing CDs or radio stations. Prepare for parking and bridge tolls before the trip by having the money in an easily accessible place.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.D.11(3)	Plan your trips and review maps before pulling out of the driveway, not while driving. Never stop on a freeway or other roadway if you are lost or to read directions. Exit the freeway or pull to the side of the roadway, park, and study the map again. Another option is to have a passenger do the navigating for you while you are driving.	
	08.D.11(4)	Cellular phone use while driving also has been shown to increase your risk of a traffic accident. A number of tips for using cellular phones were presented in Unit 2. In general, minimize cellular phone use while driving, and never take your eyes off the road.	
	08.D.11(5)	As was indicated earlier, if you are angry, upset, or preoccupied with personal problems, you cannot give driving safely your full attention. Do not drive if you are emotionally distressed.	
	08.D.11(6)	Other passengers, particularly children and pets, can distract you from driving. If you are going to have a conversation with passengers, do not take your eyes off the road. Allow them to perform tasks such as adjusting the radio or temperature in the vehicle, or reading a map or directions.	
	08.D.11(7)	Sometimes passengers will point out things on the side of the road that they want you to look at. Recognize that this means you must take your eyes off the roadway ahead and can result in a rear-end collision. If you want to look at sights, pull off the road in a safe place.	
	08.D.11(8)	Because children can become bored and restless during long road trips, they can be very distracting. If you need to address children passengers, it is best to pull off the roadway. Do not turn your head around to discipline children while driving. Try to fend off their boredom by carrying books, games, or tapes in your vehicle to keep children occupied during long trips.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.D.11(9) Having pets in a car can also be distracting. They may jump on your lap or under your feet, which can result in an accident. If you need to transport an animal, use a carrying cage or have a passenger hold the pet.	
		08.D.11(10) Do not slow down needlessly to look at broken down vehicles, controlled accident scenes, or road construction (i.e., rubbernecking). If you are looking to the side of the road, you are not paying attention to vehicles in front of and behind you. Rubbernecking takes your attention away from driving and is a major cause of accidents, particularly on freeways.	
		08.D.11(11) In heavy traffic, it is easy to "zone out" and start thinking about all sorts of things besides driving. If you find yourself zoning-out, do something different, such as rolling down the window or changing the radio station, to keep yourself focused on driving. Remember to continually scan the roadway and your mirrors.	
		08.D.11(12) Sometimes while driving you may drop something, lose a contact lens, be stung by a bee, be distracted by children, or be bothered in some other way. Some people panic when these things occur. They become more concerned with the problem than their driving and often run off the road or into another car. Don't let this happen to you. If you have a problem or there is a distraction, pull over to the side of the road immediately and then take care of the problem.	
08.D.12	Accidents, driver behavior, visual search	08.D.12(1) When you drive, you should keep your eyes moving and look for potential hazards all around your vehicle. Do not focus on the back of the car ahead of you.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 18 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.D.12(2) Look for the stoplights of vehicles ahead of you, vehicles that may attempt to merge, and pedestrians who may enter the roadway. Make sure to be aware of traffic signs which warn you of upcoming road conditions.	
		08.D.12(3) Don't just assume that a signal light will still be green by the time you reach it. Signal lights which have been green for a long time are called "stale greens" and are likely to change soon. Be aware of how long a light has been green so that you are ready to react if the light turns yellow before you arrive at the intersection.	
		08.D.12(4) When slowing down, merging, changing lanes, passing, or making a turn, it is particularly important to be aware of where vehicles, pedestrians, and objects are around your vehicle. Check your mirrors and blind spots before attempting any of these maneuvers.	
		08.D.12(5) If you cannot see the roadway ahead because of a large vehicle, such as a truck or SUV, make sure to give yourself additional space in front of your vehicle so you are able to react in an emergency situation. You may want to change lanes so that you can see what is going on ahead of you.	
08.D.13	Accidents, driver behavior, decision-making	08.D.13(1) Making a poor decision while driving can also result in an accident. Poor decisions can be a result of (a) not knowing the law, (b) disregarding the law, and (c) taking unnecessary risks.	
		08.D.13(2) It is your responsibility to know and follow the rules of the road. If you get into an accident because you fail to yield to other vehicles and pedestrians at a YIELD sign, for example, you will be found at fault for the accident. Ignorance is not an excuse for failing to obey vehicle laws.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 19 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.D.13(3) Drivers take unnecessary risks while driving and make poor decisions for a number of different reasons. Drivers who are in a hurry or who are showing off are particularly likely to make poor driving decisions which result in an accident. Remember that accidents as a result of making poor decisions are 100% avoidable.	
08.D.14	Accidents, driver behavior, skid recovery	<p>08.D.14(1) Not understanding how to handle your vehicle in emergency skids is a significant cause of accidents. Skids occur whenever tires lose their grip on the road. Certain road and weather conditions are particularly likely to cause your vehicle to skid. These conditions are outlined later in this unit. You need to know how to handle your vehicle during skids to avoid accidents.</p> <p>08.D.14(2) Skids are caused by four different behaviors: (a) over-braking--braking too hard and locking up your wheels, (b) over-steering--tightening of the turning radius-- the back end starts to spin around and lose traction and start to rotate, (c) over-acceleration--supplying too much power to the drive wheels, which causes them to spin, and (d) driving too fast for road conditions-- driving too fast results in the need to over-brake and over-steer.</p> <p>08.D.14(3) An <i>acceleration skid</i> occurs when your drive wheels lose traction with the road while accelerating. Acceleration skids usually occur on ice or snow, but can also occur on asphalt, sand or dirt, or wet pavement. To recover from an acceleration skid, you should not apply brakes. Ease off the gas pedal. If the road is very slippery, you may need to push the clutch in. Otherwise, the engine can keep the wheels from rolling freely and help regain traction.</p>	<p>CDH: 57</p> <p>CDH: 57</p>

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 20 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.D.14(4)	A <i>locked wheel skid</i> occurs when your brakes have stopped your wheels from turning but the vehicle is still moving. Locked wheel skids are frequently caused by applying the brakes too heavily when on slippery roads or to avoid an accident. To recover from a locked wheel skid, you should first release a slight amount of brake pressure until the wheels starts rolling and then progressively reapply more pressure while avoiding another lock up. Next, quickly straighten the front wheels as the vehicle starts to straighten, and then slow the vehicle gradually with your brakes while avoiding locking the wheels again.	CDH: 57
	08.D.14(5)	If you lose traction while going around a corner, you should: (a) take your foot off the gas pedal and do not brake, and (b) turn your front wheels in the direction of the skid until you regain control. Avoid counter-steering by realigning your front wheels with the rear when they come around.	
	08.D.14(6)	If you lose traction while going around a corner or turn in a front-wheel drive vehicle, you should apply some gas, not brake, steer in the direction you want the vehicle to travel, and drive through it.	
	08.D.14(7)	Two general points to remember for recovering from skids are: (a) do not brake, and (b) keep your eyes pointed in the direction you want to go and you will automatically steer there.	CDH: 57
	08.D.14(8)	The key to avoiding skids is to always smoothly apply your brakes and accelerator, and to turn slowly and smoothly. You should also reduce your speed before approaching turns and when driving in potentially hazardous conditions such as wet, icy, or snow-covered roadways, or on roadways with loose gravel.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 21 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.E Emergency situations, general	08.E.01 Emergency situations, general, introduction	08.E.01(1) Slamming on your brakes is not the best reaction for every driving emergency. A panic stop, under most conditions, should be the last resort because you risk locking up all four wheels and losing steering control (i.e., skidding). In many situations you can steer around an obstacle more easily than trying to stop before you reach it, even if your vehicle is equipped with ABS brakes.	
		08.E.01(2) Accidents happen because drivers do not expect them and do not know how to react properly. The best ways to avoid an accident are to anticipate it and be ready to respond; know the handling characteristics and limitations of your car; and above all don't panic.	
		08.E.01(3) Learning the appropriate ways to react to different emergency situations in the split second you have to make a decision is the key to becoming a safe driver.	
08.F Emergency situations, mechanical failure	08.F.01 Emergency situations, mechanical failure, introduction	08.F.01(1) A significant number of accidents are caused by vehicle equipment failure such as: (a) bald or defective tires, (b) bad brakes, (c) inoperative lights, and (d) degraded steering and suspension components. To help avoid accidents caused by mechanical failure, you should keep your vehicle in good working condition and perform routine maintenance (This topic is discussed in detail in Unit 6).	CDH: p. 56
		08.F.01(2) Even properly maintained vehicles will occasionally experience mechanical failure. You should know how to react to avoid an accident when it happens to you. The first thing to remember is to not panic. You will be able to think more clearly and respond appropriately if you do not panic.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 22 of 88

Section	Issue		Learning Objective	References
08.F.02	Emergency situations, mechanical failure, stuck gas pedal	08.F.02(1)	If your gas pedal is stuck down, you should: (a) shift to neutral, (b) apply the brakes, (c) keep your eyes on the road to look for a way out, (d) warn other drivers by blinking and flashing your emergency lights, (e) try to drive the car safely off the road, and (e) as the last step turn off your ignition when you no longer need to change direction and are stopped. Turn on your emergency flashers.	CDH: p. 57
		08.F.02(2)	Turning the ignition switch completely off while moving is never the correct response to an emergency situation. It may lock the steering wheel and you will be unable to steer the vehicle. Never turn your ignition off while your vehicle is still moving, no matter what sort of emergency situation you are experiencing.	CDH: p. 57
08.F.03	Emergency situations, mechanical failure, tire blowout	08.F.03(1)	If you have a tire blowout or lose a wheel while driving, you should: (a) hold the steering wheel tightly and steer straight ahead, (b) slow down gradually, taking your foot off the gas pedal slowly but without applying the brakes, and (c) slow to a stop off the road, applying the brakes only when the car is almost stopped. Turn on your emergency flashers.	CDH: p. 56
08.F.04	Emergency situations, mechanical failure, brake failure	08.F.04(1)	If your brakes suddenly give out while driving, you should: (a) downshift to lower gear or lower range (automatic transmissions) to help slow your vehicle, (b) pump the brake pedal fast and hard to build up brake fluid pressure -- you will know in three to four pumps if the brakes will work -- but do not pump antilock brakes, (c) use your parking or emergency brake to gently slow your vehicle, but release it before the vehicle starts to skid, (d) steer and swerve to avoid a collision or steer into something soft like bushes, (e) sound your horn and flash your lights to alert other drivers, and (f) when you are stopped, turn off the ignition and turn on your emergency flashers.	CDH: p. 56

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 23 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.F.04(2) If your brakes get wet and do not work (such as after you travel through a big puddle), dry them by lightly pressing the gas pedal and brake pedal at the same time so that the vehicle drives against the pressure of the brakes. Do this only until the brakes begin working.	CDH: 56
08.F.05	Emergency situations, mechanical failure, cooling system failure	08.F.05(1) If your vehicle's engine is running hot, you should: (a) turn off the air conditioner, (b) if you are in stop and go traffic change your route so that you can get air moving over the radiator, (c) pull to the side of the road if you see steam, (d) shut off the engine, turn on your emergency flashers, open the hood, and wait 20 minutes before inspecting the radiator, (d) after 20 minutes, refill the radiator by pouring water or coolant into the overflow tank, and (e) with the hood still up, inspect for leaks and call a tow truck if you cannot fix them.	
		08.F.05(2) Driving up hills or mountains while using your air conditioning puts extra strain on your engine and may cause your vehicle to overheat. Use you air conditioning sparingly when driving up steep roads.	
08.F.06	Emergency situations, mechanical failure, headlight failure	08.F.06(1) If both of your headlights go out while driving at night, you should: (a) first wiggle the dimmer switch, which will often put the lights back on, (b) wiggle the headlight switch a few times, (c) if the lights do not come on, put on your parking lights, turn indicators, or emergency flashers to warn other drivers, and (d) pull off the road as quickly as possible and leave the emergency flashers on. You might try checking your battery terminals to see if they are loose or checking your fuses to see if one or more is blown.	CDH: p. 57

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		Do not try driving at night with only your parking lights working or with no lights working. It is extremely dangerous, even for only short periods. Also, do not attempt to use your high-beam headlights and keep driving, because you will not be able to dim them for other vehicles on the roadway.	
	08.F.07 Emergency situations, mechanical failure, engine failure	08.F.07(1) If your engine stalls while you are driving, you should: (a) turn on your emergency flashers immediately, (b) move your vehicle to the side of the road as quickly and safely as possible, realizing that the steering wheel may take more force to turn because the power steering won't work, (c) stop your vehicle, realizing that you may need more force on the brakes because power brakes will not work, (d) turn on your emergency flashers, and (d) try to restart the engine. If the engine won't start, call for help. Do not try to restart your engine while you are still moving.	CDH: p. 56
	08.F.08 Emergency situations, mechanical failure, hood latch failure	08.F.08(1) If your hood suddenly flies up while you are driving, you should: (a) slow down, (b) try to look under the hood to see where you are going, but if you cannot then put your head out the window to look around the hood and use the lane line markings as a guide, and (c) pull off the road as soon as is safely possible and put on your emergency flashers.	CDH: p. 57
08.G Emergency situations, other	08.G.01 Emergency situations, other, introduction	08.G.01(1) There are other emergency situations which do not necessarily involve mechanical failure, including: (a) running your tires off the pavement, (b) being approached head-on by another vehicle, (c) going off the road into deep water, and (d) a vehicle fire. You should know how to respond in these situations too.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.G.02	Emergency situations, other, tire off pavement	08.G.02(1) If you accidentally run one or more of your tires off of the pavement and onto the shoulder of the roadway, do not quickly turn the steering wheel back towards the roadway. This can cause you to hook the edge of the pavement and skid or flip your vehicle. You should ease your foot off of the gas pedal and brake gently. Slowly steer your vehicle back onto the pavement.	
08.G.03	Emergency situations, other, oncoming vehicle in lane	08.G.03(1) If a vehicle is approaching you head on when you are in the proper lane for traveling in your direction, you should: (a) slow down, (b) pull to the right, and (c) sound your horn. 08.G.03(2) Do not pull into the left (oncoming) lane, because the other driver may realize their error and swerve back into the proper lane. Remember that hitting anything else is usually better than a head-on collision with another vehicle.	
08.G.04	Emergency situations, other, vehicle in deep water	08.G.04(1) If your vehicle goes into water such as a lake or river, you should: (a) remember that your vehicle will float for at least a short period of time, (b) unfasten your seatbelt and help other passengers unfasten theirs, and (c) escape through a window (do not open a door). 08.G.04(2) If the vehicle sinks quickly, you should climb into the back seat, because an air pocket should form there. Get out as quickly as possible through a window. 08.G.04(3) If you cannot get out through the window because your electric windows have shorted, open the door slowly. Although it may be hard to do so at first, as water enters the vehicle, the pressure will equalize and you should be able to open the door.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 26 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.H Emergency breakdowns on the roadway	08.G.05 Emergency situations, other, vehicle fire	08.G.05(1) If you see smoke or flames coming from your engine while you are driving, you should: (a) pull off the roadway as quickly as is safe, (b) turn off the ignition and get away from the vehicle, (c) call the fire department, and (d) not try to put the fire out yourself because it can be very dangerous.	
		08.G.05(2) If you have a fire extinguisher and the fire is within the passenger compartment or bed of the vehicle, you can try to put the fire out once you are stopped.	
	08.H.01 Emergency breakdowns, general	08.H.01(1) Many accidents happen because a driver didn't see a stalled car until it was too late to stop. When your car breaks down on the road, make sure that other drivers can see it.	CDH: 35
		08.H.01(2) Prevention is the best safeguard for breakdowns. Frequently check the fuel gauge, oil and other fluid levels, tire tread and pressure, engine drive belts, hoses and the radiator. Be sure the car's stoplights, headlights, turn signals and four-way emergency flashers operate properly.	
		08.H.01(3) If you are having car trouble and have to stop: (a) if at all possible, pull off the road away from all traffic, (b) if you cannot get completely off the road, try to stop where people can see you and your car from behind-- don't stop just over a hill or just around a curve.	CDH: 35
		08.H.01(4) Turn on your emergency flashers to warn other drivers that your vehicle is broken down. If your car does not have emergency flashers, your turn signals may be used instead.	CDH: 35
		08.H.01(5) If it is safe, raise the hood of your vehicle to signal to others that your are broken down.	CDH: 35

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 27 of 88


Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.H.01(6) Give other drivers plenty of warning. If you have them, place emergency flares or reflective triangles 200 to 300 feet behind your vehicle. This allows other drivers time to change lanes, if necessary. Be very careful when using flares because they may cause fires if used near flammables such as gasoline.	CDH: 35
		08.H.01(7) If you don't have emergency flares, stay in your vehicle until help arrives. Use a cellular phone to call for help if you have one. Be careful for your safety and stay off the roadway. Don't even attempt to change a tire if it means you will be present in a traffic lane.	CDH: 35
08.H.02	Emergency breakdowns, freeways	08.H.02(1) Breaking down on a busy freeway can be a frightening and dangerous situation. As freeway traffic patterns and the hazards they present constantly vary, it is impossible to predict all situations. Therefore, it is important that the drivers continually monitor and evaluate the situation, taking the steps which will best protect the driver, passengers, and other freeway users.	
		08.H.02(2) At the first sign of a vehicle problem or malfunction, exit the freeway. If you are unable to exit, try to drive safely onto the far right shoulder, as far off the road as possible. If you can't reach the right shoulder, park as close to the center divider as you can.	
		08.H.02(3) Whenever your vehicle is disabled on the roadway, use your vehicle's hazard warning lights. Be sure you know where your vehicle's hazard light switch is located and how to use it. Warning lights should also be used when the vehicle is in the center divider or on the right shoulder, especially if parked within five feet of the roadway.	



Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention


Page 28 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.H.02(4)	If your car has a flat tire, it is better to safely drive off the freeway than try to salvage a tire that may already be beyond repair. Avoid making any repairs on the freeway. If you must do so, have someone keep an eye on traffic to warn you of approaching danger. Never turn your back on freeway traffic.	
	08.H.02(5)	If stopped in the center divider, it is generally safest to remain in your vehicle until a law enforcement officer arrives. Keep your seatbelt fastened, headrest properly positioned, and car doors locked. Do not get out and walk around the car or attempt to cross the freeway to reach the outside shoulder.	
	08.H.02(6)	If your vehicle is stopped in a particularly dangerous spot and traffic permits, exit the vehicle and find a safe location to wait for help. Such conditions may include a breakdown or an accident that has occurred in fog or smoke.	
	08.H.02(7)	If your disabled vehicle is on any part of the roadway, use emergency flares, or battery-operated or reflectorized warning devices. Exit the vehicle to place these devices only when safe. The furthest should be placed at least 300 feet behind the car. Only persons familiar with them should use flares. They should not be placed near flammable liquids or materials. Placing any warning device in traffic can be dangerous and extreme caution must be exercised.	
	08.H.02(8)	If your vehicle is stopped in a traffic lane, keep its wheels turned to follow the direction of the lane ahead of you. Vehicles stopped on the right or left shoulders should usually have the wheels pointed straight ahead.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.H.02(9) Roll down the window so you can tie a handkerchief or other cloth onto the radio antenna or the door handle closest to traffic without exiting the vehicle. Display an emergency sign, if available. If safe to exit the vehicle do so, and raise the car's hood as a signal you need help. When exiting the vehicle do so on the side away from traffic.	
		08.H.02(10) If your vehicle will be left unattended, take your keys. Set the parking brake or block the wheels, and turn the engine off. These steps are generally advisable even when waiting in a vehicle. To further secure your vehicle, place the gearshift in "park" if it has an automatic transmission or leave the vehicle in gear if it has a manual transmission.	
08.H.03	Emergency breakdowns, freeways, call boxes	08.H.03(1) In California and many other states, freeway call boxes are located at intervals on the right shoulder of the freeway. The telephone is found in a bright yellow box. A blue "Call Box" sign is mounted above the yellow box. The numerals on the blue sign indicate the freeway's route and call box location.	
		08.H.03(2) Use a call box only if it can be reached without crossing traffic lanes, on/off ramps or transition roads. Walk only on the shoulder area as far away from traffic as possible. Always face traffic while using a call box. See and be seen by oncoming traffic.	
		08.H.03(3) Open the call box, lift the receiver, and push the button to initiate your call for assistance. No money is needed to use it. Wait for the ring. You will hear equipment automatically dialing and then ringing the switchboard. In California, the California Highway Patrol operator will answer the call. If circuits are busy, a recording will advise you to stay on the line. Don't hang up. Waiting calls are taken in order. If you hear a busy signal without the recording, hang up and try again.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.H.03(4) When the operator answers, be prepared to give the call box identification numbers (on the sign above the box), the nature of your trouble, and your vehicle's location. Upon request, the operator will phone your automobile club, a family member, friend, insurance company or other service for emergency assistance. Once your call is completed, make sure the receiver is properly replaced to leave the circuit free for other callers.	
		08.H.03(5) If your car is in a particularly dangerous spot, it may be safer to stay near the call box or go to another area, such as behind a guardrail near your vehicle. If it is safe, wait with your vehicle. Remain inside with your safety belt fastened, with the headrest properly positioned and doors locked until help arrives.	
		08.H.03(6) If a friend or relative comes to help, make sure they park 100 to 200 feet in front of the disabled vehicle to leave room for the tow truck. Do not stand between two vehicles at any time. Wait in the other vehicle with safety belts fastened and head rests properly positioned. Make sure the wheels of the vehicle are pointed straight ahead. When the tow truck arrives, wait in it, not in your vehicle.	
08.I Hazardous roadways	08.I.01 Hazardous roadways, introduction	08.I.01(1) Certain roadways and portions of the road are more dangerous than others. When driving in these areas, you are at increased risk for being involved in an accident. You should be aware of these conditions and adjust your driving to appropriately mitigate the increased risk.	
	08.I.02 Hazardous roadways, intersections, introduction	08.I.02(1) As was indicated earlier, most accidents in urban areas occur at intersections. Because of the danger presented by intersections, it is very important that you approach them with caution and make an extra effort to be aware of what is happening in and around the intersection.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References	
 		<p>08.1.02(2) It is important that you scan for potential hazards at intersections such as pedestrians, bicycles, persons running red lights, and persons starting left-hand turns. Look for traffic signals, signs, and potential hazards as you approach the intersection.</p> <p>08.1.02(3) Accidents at intersections are most frequently caused by drivers disobeying stop signs and red lights, or otherwise violating the right-of-way of other drivers, such as by turning left in front of an approaching vehicle.</p> <p>08.1.02(4) It is dangerous to pass another vehicle where someone is likely to enter or cross the road. Such places include intersections, crossroads, railroad crossings, and shopping center entrances.</p> <p>08.1.02(5) If you pass in an intersection, your view of people, cars, motorcycles, bicycles, or trains is blocked by the vehicle you are passing. Also, a driver turning onto the road into the left lane won't expect to find you in his or her lane. He or she may not even look your way.</p> <p>08.1.02(6) It is dangerous, although not explicitly illegal, to change lanes in an intersection. You could be cited for making an unsafe lane change if, in the opinion of the law enforcement officer, your lane change was hazardous for conditions.</p>	<p>CDH: 14, 43</p> <p>CDH: 43</p>	
	08.1.03	Hazardous roadways, intersections, controlled	<p>08.1.03(1) You should scan for traffic controls and prohibitive signs as you approach intersections, so that you are ready to respond before you reach the intersection. You should always obey the signs and signals at controlled intersections, but do not assume that other drivers will do so.</p>	CDH: 43

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.1.03(2)	Common traffic controls found at intersections include: (a) flashing and non-flashing signal lights and arrows, (b) stop and yield signs, (c) signs controlling U turns, left turns, and right turns, (d) signs designating specific lanes for left, right, and U turns, and straight-through traffic, and (e) signs directing traffic.	VC: 21450, 21453, 21457, 22453(b), 22100, 21454
	08.1.03(3)	Right-of-way rules help people drive safely and in an orderly manner. These rules go along with courtesy and common sense. Bicycles, scooters, and pedestrians must obey right-of-way rules too.	CDH: 17
	08.1.03(4)	Never insist on taking the right-of-way. If another driver does not yield to you when he or she should, forget it. Let the other driver go first. You will help prevent accidents and make driving more pleasant. Do not insist on your right-of-way if it will help to avoid an accident.	CDH: 17
	08.1.03(5)	You also should not excessively yield your right-of-way, or insist on always letting others go ahead of you. If another driver expects you to take your legal turn, you may delay traffic by stopping or slowing unnecessarily to allow another driver to go ahead of you. It can cause traffic delays and cause other drivers to become angry.	CDH: 17
	08.1.03(6)	At intersections controlled by signals, do not enter the intersection on a green light until all vehicles and pedestrians are out of the intersection. You should not enter an intersection on a red light, except when making a permitted left or right turn.	CDH: 15
	08.1.03(7)	You should not enter an intersection on a yellow light (solid or arrow), unless it is unsafe for you to stop. If you can't stop safely, look out for vehicles that may enter the intersection when the light changes.	CDH: p. 14-15

Section	Issue		Learning Objective	References
08.I.04	Hazardous roadways, intersections, uncontrolled	08.I.04(1)	At intersections without signal lights, STOP, or YIELD signs, slow down and be ready to stop. Yield to vehicles already in the intersection or just entering it. Also yield to vehicles which arrive before you or to the vehicle on your right if it reaches the intersection at the same time as your vehicle.	CDH: 18
		08.I.04(2)	At a "T" intersection, vehicles on the through road have the right-of-way.	CDH: 18
		08.I.04(3)	If you can not see clearly 100 ft in both directions when approaching an uncontrolled intersection (a blind intersection), you should not be driving faster than 15 MPH so that you will have time to stop if a vehicle pulls out suddenly.	CDH: 19
		08.I.04(4)	If your view of an uncontrolled intersection is obstructed by parked cars, trees, bushes, buildings, or other objects, you should stop before entering the intersection and slowly inch forward until you can see if there is cross-traffic before proceeding through the intersection.	CDH: 19
08.I.05	Hazardous roadways, daytime headlights	08.I.05(1)	Narrow, undivided 2-lane rural highways with 55 MPH speed limits can also be particularly hazardous. Because vehicles are traveling in opposite directions at high speeds without a barrier or median, dangerous head-on collisions are more likely to occur.	
		08.I.05(2)	Some of these highways have mandatory daylight headlight requirements to make your vehicle more visible to other traffic. You must turn your headlights on when driving through one of these zones, regardless of the time of day.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 34 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.1.05(3) You should also use your headlights on small country or mountain roads, even on sunny days. This will help other drivers see you and help to avoid a head-on collision. Don't forget to turn them off when you park.	CDH: 35
08.1.06	Hazardous roadways, hills and curves	08.1.06(1) Hills and curves create situations that are hazardous by: (a) blocking your view ahead and the view of other drivers, and (b) causing vehicles to move slower or faster than is safe.	CDH: p. 55
		08.1.06(2) Because you cannot tell what is on the other side of a steep hill or sharp curve, you must be going slowly enough to be able to stop. When approaching a curve in the road or hill which blocks your view of the road ahead, slow down so you can stop, if necessary. A vehicle may be stopped or a pedestrian may be crossing the roadway that you can't see until you are around the curve or over the hill.	CDH: 35, 55
		08.1.06(3) You must be able to see at least one-third of a mile ahead to pass safely. Any time your view is blocked by a hill or curve, you should assume that there is an oncoming car just out of sight. This means you should only pass if a hill or curve ahead is more than one-third of a mile away. You must not drive on the left side of a roadway when coming to a curve or the top of a hill where you can't see far enough ahead to be sure it is safe to pass.	CDH: 43
		08.1.06(4) On curves there is a strong outward pull on your vehicle. You should cautiously approach curves, particularly when the road may be slippery due to rain, mud, snow, wet leaves, or gravel.	CDH: 54
		08.1.06(5) You should obey warning speed limits on curves and freeway ramps. If one is not posted, you should judge how sharp the curve is and adjust your speed before you enter the curve. Braking on a curve may cause you to skid.	CDH: 54

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.1.06(6) Recall from Unit 3 that when you are driving uphill, the force of gravity is working against you and you may need to accelerate or change to a lower gear to maintain your speed. Be aware of vehicles behind you which may get too close if you fail to maintain your speed when going up a hill. Change into the rightmost lane if you are driving slower than other traffic.	
		08.1.06(7) When you drive downhill the reverse is true. Gravity will cause you to go faster and increase your stopping distance. You may need to shift to a lower gear or smoothly apply your breaks to slow to a safe speed and control your vehicle.	
		08.1.06(8) Too much braking (i.e., riding the brake pedal), when driving down long, steep hills can cause brake failure. Therefore, it is better to use your engine to slow your vehicle when traveling down long, steep hills than to use your brakes. To do this, shift to a lower gear before you start down the hill. In most cases, you will still need to use your brakes, but downshifting will lessen your amount of brake use.	
08.1.07	Hazardous roadways, parking lots	08.1.07(1) One of the likeliest places to be involved in a property-damage only accident is in a parking lot. Accidents are common in parking lots because: (a) drivers are not paying attention to safe driving, (b) drivers must back out of parking spots, and (c) drivers do not think they need to follow the rules of the road in parking lots. Post office parking lots usually have the highest incidence of accidents, because they have the quickest turnover with cars parked often for less than 5 minutes.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.1.07(2) Some drivers seem to suspend their good judgment when looking for a parking space. They consider the traffic signs and road markings such as speed limits and STOP signs to be optional in parking lots because they think on private property they are not subject to enforcement. Others drivers ignore the traffic lanes and cut diagonally across the lot. However, you can be cited for driving unsafely in public parking lots by law enforcement, just like on public roadways. Remember to obey the rules of the road when driving in parking lots.	
		08.1.07(3) Pedestrians are also at high risk in parking lots because they must walk in the traffic lanes. Pay extra attention for pedestrians, particularly small children, when driving in parking lots and pulling out of parking spaces.	
		08.1.07(4) The best way to avoid an accident in a parking lot is to be aware of everything all around your vehicle. Scan for cars that might be cutting diagonally across the lot and for pedestrians who may dart out from between cars. Drive slower and obey all the usual vehicle laws, signs, and pavement markings when driving in a parking lot.	
08.1.08	Hazardous roadways, city streets	08.1.08(1) Urban roadways are more dangerous than open roadways for a number of reasons: (a) urban roadways have the highest number of intersections, which are where accidents are the most likely to happen, (b) there is an increased likelihood of children and other pedestrians crossing or entering the roadway in urban areas, (c) vehicles in urban areas are generally not just driving straight-- they are merging, turning, stopping, or making other maneuvers which can be hazardous, and (d) parked vehicles and other objects obstruct your view of the roadway in urban areas.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.I.08(2) Driving alongside other vehicles in urban traffic can be dangerous. Do not drive alongside other vehicles or in the blind spots of their drivers (to the rear sides of other vehicles). You should also avoid driving in the lane closest to opposing traffic when lanes are undivided.	
		08.I.08(3) Parked vehicles in urban areas can create a situation which is hazardous because they: (a) may suddenly pull out from a parking space or the side of the road, (b) obscure vehicles pulling out from alleys and driveways, and (c) have occupants who may suddenly open doors or exit on left side of parked vehicles.	
	08.I.09 Hazardous roadways, freeways	08.I.09(1) Driving in freeway traffic poses special hazards. Remember to be aware of merging vehicles at freeway ramps, leave an adequate cushion of space in front of your vehicle, and do not zone-out in heavy traffic; stay focused on the task at hand.	
08.J Hazardous weather and other natural phenomena	08.J.01 Hazardous natural phenomena, introduction	08.J.01(1) Certain natural conditions make the roadways more dangerous than at other times. These conditions include: (a) fog, (b) dust, (c) smoke, (d) rain or other wet roadways, (d) snow, ice, or mud, and (e) strong winds. You need to know what to do when you encounter these conditions to avoid an accident. Driving at night is also more dangerous than driving during the day because your vision is more limited. You should also know what to do if an earthquake occurs while you are driving.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 38 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.J.01(2) When driving in bad weather, you should remember that the faster the speed, the less control you have over your vehicle. Rather than just following the posted speed limit, you should consider how the road conditions may affect the safe operation of your vehicle. For example, if the posted speed limit is 35 MPH, you should not drive this speed if you are traveling towards a curve on a downhill icy road. Many new drivers do not slow to safe speeds for road conditions, which is one reason why they have more out-of-control accidents than do experienced drivers.	CDH: 54
		08.J.01(3) Make sure that your vehicle's windows and lights are clean and working before driving in bad weather. Check that the windshield wipers and defroster are properly working and that you have adequate tread on your tires.	
		08.J.01(4) You should carry emergency equipment when driving in bad weather such as: (a) blankets or sleeping bags, (b) non-perishable food, (c) water, (d) flares, and (e) extra clothing. Carry a cellular phone for emergency situations, if you have one. Carry tire chains when you know you will be driving in the snow or when you think it might snow.	
08.J.02	Hazardous natural phenomena, fog	08.J.02(1) The best advice for fog is to avoid driving in it altogether. Serious pile-up accidents involving multiple vehicles frequently occur in severe fog. You should consider postponing your trip until the fog clears.	CDH: 34
		08.J.02(2) If you must drive in the fog, then slow down and turn your low beam headlights on (and fog lights, if you have them). The light from high beam headlights will reflect back and cause serious glare, so you should not use them in the fog. Never drive with just your fog or parking lights on, whether or not there is fog.	CDH: 34

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 39 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.J.02(3)	You should increase the space cushion (following distance) in front of your vehicle and be prepared to stop within the space you can see in front of your vehicle. Avoid crossing or passing lanes of traffic unless absolutely necessary.	CDH: 34
	08.J.02(4)	Use your windshield wipers and defroster for best vision.	CDH: 34
	08.J.02(5)	If visibility is poor, roll down your window and turn off your radio so you can listen for vehicles you cannot see.	CDH: 34
	08.J.02(6)	You should watch for slow moving vehicles ahead and check your rear-view mirror for vehicles approaching from the rear. Only use your brakes when you need to; do not repeatedly flash your brake lights for no reason because it will confuse other drivers behind you.	
	08.J.02(7)	If the fog becomes so thick that you can barely see, pull completely off the road. Get off at an exit or rest stop, if possible, and wait for conditions to improve. Do not continue driving until you can see better. Turn off your lights, or another driver may see your taillights pull in behind you thinking you are on the roadway.	CDH: 34
	08.J.02(8)	If your vehicle stalls in the fog, you should: (a) move off the roadway as quickly as possible, (b) move away from your vehicle, and (c) use flasher or flares to warn others.	
08.J.03	Hazardous natural phenomena, dust storms	08.J.03(1) Certain parts of California are prone to have large dust storms which limit your visibility similar to fog. If you can avoid driving in a dust storm, stay off the road. If you must drive, use the methods prescribed for driving in fog.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 40 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.J.04	Hazardous natural phenomena, smoke	08.J.04(1) If smoke from a large fire such as a wildfire obstructs your ability to see the road ahead and be seen by other drivers, use the methods prescribed for driving in fog. If you can avoid driving through smoky areas, do so.	
08.J.05	Hazardous natural phenomena, wet weather, general	08.J.05(1) Regardless of your driving experience, the odds are greater that you will have a collision in wet weather. A hard rain can limit visibility so much you can't see the edge of the road, traffic signs, or other cars. If you must drive under such conditions, it's helpful to have the knowledge and skills to cope.	
		08.J.05(2) Wet, snow covered, or icy road surfaces create a situation which is hazardous. If possible, do not drive when the roadway is wet, snow-covered, or icy. Wait until the weather is better, or at least until the road has been snow-plowed.	CDH: p. 55
08.J.06	Hazardous natural phenomena, wet weather, vision	08.J.06(1) Keep your windshield and windows clean. It is important to clean the inside of your windows at least once a week – more often if you smoke.	
		08.J.06(2) Use the defrosters to keep front and rear windshields clear. On a cold day, move the heat control to "hot" and let the engine warm up before turning on the defrosters and blowers. This will prevent moisture from collecting on the inside of the glass. If the windshield or windows get foggy, open a window slightly and turn the defroster fan to a higher speed. Use the air conditioner to reduce humidity.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 41 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.J.06(3) Although tinted windows have been promoted to reduce glare from the sun and make air conditioning more efficient, they also reduce visibility in inclement weather. Consider options to tinted windows such as sunglasses and sun visors to improve visibility.	
		08.J.06(4) Make sure you are able to see and be seen. When driving on wet streets, mud and dirt splash on the headlights, reducing effectiveness by up to 90 percent. Stop periodically during a long trip to clean your headlights, taillights, and windshield. Keep low beam headlights on at all times in wet conditions, especially on dark or overcast days.	CDH: 31
		08.J.06(5) When visibility is so limited that you can't see the edge of the road or other vehicles at a safe distance, it's time to pull off and wait for the rain or snow to ease up. It is best to stop at a rest area or exit the freeway and go to a protected area. If the roadside is your only option, pull off the road as far as you can, preferably past the end of a guardrail. Other drivers frequently strike vehicles parked at the side of the road. Respect the limitations of reduced visibility and turn headlights off and emergency flashers on to alert other drivers.	
08.J.07	Hazardous natural phenomena, wet weather, braking	08.J.07(1) If you must drive during inclement weather, there are precautions that you should take to avoid skidding. The number one rule for driving in bad weather is to slow down, particularly when approaching turns, sharp curves, and intersections. You should give yourself an extra-large space cushion around your vehicle, particularly in front. Avoid making quick maneuvers such as sudden turns, braking, or acceleration; do these things gradually and slowly to avoid skidding.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.J.07(2)	When driving in wet weather conditions on roads or highways, you may need to take evasive action to avoid a collision. Steering is preferred to braking at speeds above 25 miles per hour because less distance is required to steer around an object than to brake to a stop. In wet weather sudden braking often leads to skids.	
	08.J.07(3)	Your car's grip on the road depends on a small area of contact where the tires meet the road surface, called the tire's footprint. The amount of water on the road, your speed and the condition of your tires affect footprint traction. Good tread allows water to escape from under the tires. Proper inflation also increases traction. Low tire pressure allows the tread to squeeze together, reducing the tire's ability to wipe or channel away water. Tires specifically designed for wet weather traction allow more water to escape, keeping the footprint in contact with the road surface.	
	08.J.07(4)	Stopping on a slippery surface requires more distance. Focus your attention as far ahead as possible – at least 20 to 30 seconds. The best way to stop on a slippery surface is to use threshold or controlled braking and shifting. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, the best way to threshold or control braking is the heel-and-toe method. Keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use your toes to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal. Stop the pressure just short of locking the wheels. If your heel leaves the floor, the ball of your foot pushes the pedal and the wheels lock up because you're controlling the brake with your thigh muscles, which are incapable of finer control.	
	08.J.07(5)	Under the stress of trying to stop quickly, drivers almost inevitably overreact and lock the wheels. If this happens, use heel-and-toe action to release brake pressure one or two degrees then immediately reapply it with slightly less pressure.	

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.J.07(6) If you have anti-lock brakes you should also use the heel-and-toe method. In addition, do not remove your foot from the brake pedal or pump the pedal. If you apply too much brake pressure and the wheels lock momentarily, you might feel the brake pedal pulse back against your foot. Pumping the pedal works against the anti-lock system by providing false information to the sensors.	
08.J.08	Hazardous natural phenomena, rain	08.J.08(1) While driving in the rain, you should: (a) obtain maximum visibility with low beam headlights and windshield wipers, (b) reduce your speed below that for dry conditions, (c) decrease your speed when entering a curve, (d) stay on the paved portion of highway, (e) drive in the tracks of the car ahead, (f) allow a greater distance between you and the car ahead, and (g) avoid sudden stops or turns.	CDH: p. 54
		08.J.08(2) Use your low-beam headlights whenever it is raining. To improve visibility, you may have to stop to wipe mud or snow off of your windshield, headlights, and taillights.	CDH: 34
		08.J.08(3) Slow down at the first sign of rain, drizzle, or snow on the road. This is when many road pavements are most slippery because oil and dust have not been washed off the roadway. In other words, the roadway is usually the most slippery when it just starts to rain and it has not rained for some time. If the road is slippery, it will not give your tires the traction they need to make quick stops, and maneuver turns and corners. You must drive more slowly than you would on a dry road.	CDH: 34-35, 55
		08.J.08(4) If it starts to rain on a hot day, pavement can be slippery for the first few minutes. Heat causes the oil in the asphalt to come to the surface. It makes the road more slippery until the oil is washed away.	CDH: 55

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 44 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.J.08(5)	If the roadway is wet, you should travel at least 5 to 10 MPH slower than you normally would.	CDH: 55
	08.J.08(6)	In a very heavy rainstorm, you may not be able to see more than 100 feet ahead. When you cannot see any farther than that, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 MPH.	CDH: 34
	08.J.08(7)	Choose a speed consistent with the amount of water on the road. At 30 miles per hour or less, properly inflated tires with good tread will maintain contact. Even a brand-new tire will lose some footprint contact at 35 miles per hour. At 50 miles per hour, water may separate the tire from the road and cause hydroplaning.	
	08.J.08(8)	Hydroplaning is when your tires lose contact with the road and are riding on a thin sheet of water. You have no traction while hydroplaning. It can occur at 50 mph or less in heavy rain, and is more likely to happen if your speed is high, your tires lack tread depth, and your vehicle is light. A slight gust of wind could throw your vehicle into a skid. To regain control, you need to take your foot off the accelerator, but do not brake. You should slow down whenever there is a lot of water on the road to avoid hydroplaning.	CDH: 55
	08.J.08(9)	Look for signs of hydroplaning such as standing water, raindrops that bubble on the road or a sloshing sound from your tires. This is your opportunity to slow down and avoid hard braking or turning sharply. Drive in the tracks of the vehicle ahead of you and increase the distance between you and the forward vehicle.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 45 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.J.08(10) If it begins to rain so hard while you are driving that you cannot see very far in front of your vehicle, slow down and get off the roadway as soon as possible. Be careful of other drivers who have also reduced their speed or who are exiting the roadway as well. Keep your parking or hazard lights on when parked on the side of the road.	CDH: 34
08.J.09	Hazardous natural phenomena, snow and ice	08.J.09(1) Sometimes a road that is normally safe becomes dangerous when slippery. Ice and packed snow on the road can cause your vehicle to skid, especially if you are driving fast or traveling downhill.	CDH: 56
		08.J.09(2) You should always use your low beams on frosty mornings when other drivers' windows may be icy or foggy. Do not use your high beams in a snow storm because they will reflect off of the falling snow and blind you.	CDH: 35
		08.J.09(3) To drive safely in snow or ice you should: (a) carry special tires or chains and know how to install them, (b) obtain maximum visibility of the details ahead by use of low beam headlights, windshield wipers, and defrosters, (c) reduce speed before turns, curves, and shady areas, (d) allow a greater distance in front of your vehicle for stopping, (e) watch for signs warning of potential icy conditions, (f) watch for areas in which ice is likely to collect such as on bridges, (g) avoid stopping or turning suddenly, (h) exercise caution in down-shifting, and (i) should avoid unnecessary stops.	CDH: 55

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 46 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.J.09(4)	If you will be driving in an area where it has snowed or may snow, carry chains in case you find yourself in conditions where you can't drive without them. Make sure you carry the correct number of chains and that they will fit your drive wheels (which is your front-wheels in a rear-wheel drive vehicle, your rear-wheels in a rear-wheel drive vehicle, and all wheels in an all-wheel drive vehicle). Learn how to put the chains on your vehicle before you need to use them. Check the weather before you leave.	CDH: p. 34
	08.J.09(5)	When driving on roadways where snow chains are required, temporary special speed limits may be posted which you must obey. These speed limits range from 25 to 40 MPH.	CVC: 22363
	08.J.09(6)	When driving on packed snow, you should drive at least 50% slower than you normally would. If there is ice on the road, you should slow to a crawl.	CDH: 55
	08.J.09(7)	Some road surfaces are more slippery than others when wet. These roads often have warning signs. Here are some clues to help you spot slippery roads: (a) on cold and/or wet days, shade from trees, buildings, and under over-overpasses can hide spots of ice-- these areas freeze first and dry out last, (b) bridges and overpasses can also hide spots of ice-- they tend to freeze before the rest of the road does, and (c) close to the freezing point, the road is icy and may be more slippery than at colder temperatures.	CDH: 55



Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 47 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.J.09(8) In California, we also have a special problem with "black ice." Black ice is very difficult to see on the roadway and appears more like a wet spot than a patch of ice. Even when you see no apparent ice on the roadway, black ice may be present. Black ice is likely to form on shady parts of the roadway such as the back sides of turns or hills. Slow down and be especially careful when the weather is cold enough to form black ice.	
		08.J.09(9) To help avoid skidding on slippery surfaces, you should: (a) drive more slowly and stay farther behind the vehicle ahead, (b) slow down as you approach curves and intersections, (c) avoid quick stops and use threshold braking as outlined earlier (unless you have antilock brakes), and (d) shift to a low gear before going down steep hills.	CDH: 56
		08.J.09(10) If you go into a skid, ease off the gas pedal, stop braking, and turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the vehicle to go. If you can't control your vehicle on a slippery surface, try to find something to stop you. Try to get a wheel on dry pavement or on the shoulder of the road. You may have to slowly edge into a snow bank or some bushes to stop.	CDH: 56
08.J.10	Hazardous natural phenomena, stuck in snow or mud	08.J.10(1) Every time the outside temperature drops 10 degrees Fahrenheit, the air pressure inside your tires goes down about one or two pounds per square inch. You should check your tire pressure frequently during cold weather and add the necessary air to keep them at recommended levels of inflation at all times. Never reduce tire pressure in an attempt to increase traction on snow or ice. It does not work and your tires will be so seriously under-inflated that driving will damage them.	
		08.J.10(2) You can avoid getting stuck in snow or mud if you carry chains in your vehicle and put them on the tires before driving in snow or mud.	CDH: 57

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 48 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.J.10(3) If you encounter muddy or slushy conditions, you need steady pulling and moderate power when traction is poor. The best remedy when wheels are stuck in snow, mud, or a soft shoulder is to apply power slowly. Keep your front wheels pointed straight ahead so the vehicle can move in a straight line. If you can't go forward, try backing out, steering in the vehicle's tracks.	
		08.J.10(4) If one of the drive wheels becomes stuck, the centrifugal forces created by rapidly spinning your tires can cause an explosion by literally tearing the tire apart. Never exceed the 35 mph indicated speedometer speed or stand near the spinning tire.	
		08.J.10(5) To recover when you are stuck in mud or snow: (a) shift to a lower gear and keep the front wheels straight (if you have a manual transmission, use second gear, not first), (b) gently step on the gas pedal, (c) avoid spinning the wheels while driving forward as far as possible, (d) shift to reverse and slowly back up as far as possible again without spinning the wheels, (e) shift to low gear again and drive forward, and (f) repeat this forward-backward rocking motion until the car rolls free; or, if in deep mud or snow, put boards or tree branches under the tires to provide traction -- never do this while wheels are spinning. If all else fails, call a tow truck.	CDH: p. 57
08.J.11	Hazardous natural phenomena, deep water on roadway	08.J.11(1) If you encounter deep water on the roadway, you should drive around it or take another route, if possible. Never drive through water that is deep enough to reach the bottom of your vehicle. If you're not sure, don't try it.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 49 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.J.11(2) If you must drive through water on the roadway, avoid letting water splash into the engine compartment by driving slowly. Water may stop your engine completely and leave you stranded in the middle of the water.	
		08.J.11(3) Do not pass through strong currents that are high enough to reach the bottom of your vehicle because they can carry the vehicle away.	
		08.J.11(4) Test your brakes after driving through deep water, and dry them by the procedure outlined earlier, if necessary.	
08.J.12	Hazardous natural phenomena, strong winds	08.J.12(1) Strong winds can blow your vehicle around, especially on bridges, when driving in the mountains, and on wide-open roads. Large vehicles, such as motorhomes, and vehicles towing trailers are especially vulnerable to being blown off course by the wind. When driving in strong winds, slow down.	
		08.J.12(2) Be ready for strong gusts which may blow your vehicle partially into another lane. Make sure to hold both hands on the steering wheel and be especially alert.	
		08.J.12(3) When strong winds are paired with rain or snow, it is especially dangerous. Rain and snow make the roadway slippery, which makes it easier for the wind to blow your vehicle around the roadway and harder for you to recover. Make sure to drive even more slowly whenever rain and snow are paired with high winds. Winds can also blow dust, sand, and other debris which can limit your visibility.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 50 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.J.13	Hazardous natural phenomena, darkness	08.J.13(1) When driving at night you should be careful and drive more slowly because you cannot see as far. Therefore, you will have less time to stop for a hazard.	CDH: p. 34
		08.J.13(2) You should only drive as fast as permits you to stop within the distance lighted by your headlights. Remember, at night, your headlights cannot follow the curves, hills, and dips in the road. There are a lot of dark/blind spots in what you can see with your headlights at night, both high and low beams. You should reduce your speed as needed. Bad weather, unexpected actions by other drivers, and fatigue can also affect your driving and what you can see.	CDH: 34
		08.J.13(3) You must turn your headlights on 30 minutes after sunset and leave them on until 30 minutes before sunrise. You must also turn them on any time you can't see at least 1,000 feet ahead. You should even use your headlights during the daytime if it is difficult to see.	CDH: 34
		08.J.13(4) Remember that it is always illegal to drive with only your parking lights on.	CDH: 34
		08.J.13(5) Use your high beams whenever possible, as long as it is not illegal or unsafe (e.g., use them on open country when other cars are not near or on dark city streets when no other traffic would be affected by your high beams).	CDH: 34

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 51 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.J.13(6)	Do not blind other drivers with your high beam headlights. Dim your lights by switching to low beams before you are 500 feet from a vehicle coming towards you. If you are following another vehicle, change to low beams when you get closer than 300 feet.	CDH: 34
	08.J.13(7)	Don't look directly into oncoming headlights. When another driver does not turn off his or her high beams, look towards the right edge of your lane. Watch the oncoming car out of the corner of your eye. Do not try to get back at the other driver by using your own high beams or even flashing them. If you do, both of you may be blinded.	CDH: 34
	08.J.13(8)	When leaving a brightly lit place, drive slowly until your eyes adjust to the darkness.	CDH: 34
	08.J.13(9)	You should look carefully for motorcycles at night. They are harder to see because they only have one headlight. Drive as far to the right as possible if a vehicle with one headlight is approaching you. It could be a bicycle or motorcycle, but it could also be a car or truck with a burnt-out headlight.	CDH: 34
08.J.14	Hazardous natural phenomena, earthquakes	08.J.14(1) Experiencing an earthquake while in a moving vehicle has been compared to driving on four flat tires.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 52 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.J.14(2) If an earthquake occurs while you are driving: (a) gradually decrease speed and pull to the side of the road, (b) do not stop on or under overpasses or bridges, (c) do not park near trees or downed power lines, and avoid parking near buildings, (d) stop the car and stay down on the floor until the shaking stops, (e) remember that aftershocks may follow the earthquake, (f) turn on your car radio and listen for broadcast emergency advisories, (g) do not continue to drive until it is safe and avoid overpasses and bridges because they may have been weakened, (h) if driving on the freeway, and if it is safe to do so, exit at the first opportunity, and (i) cooperate with public safety officials because they are trying to ensure your safety and the safety of others.	
08.K Accident avoidance and prevention	08.K.01 Accident avoidance, introduction	08.K.01(1) The key to accident avoidance is to let other drivers know what you plan to do, to avoid hazardous situations, and to always drive defensively.	CDH: 54
		08.K.01(2) If you have an accident, you may not legally be at fault; however, you may be morally at fault, if you could have prevented the accident but didn't. Remember you can prevent most accidents if you drive defensively.	CDH: 58
		08.K.01(3) You should think about every "close shave" or accident that you have. Decide what went wrong and who made the mistake. Could you have avoided the accident or near accident? What did you do wrong? By asking yourself these questions, you can see if you need to change your driving habits. Such change might help you avoid a serious accident later on.	CDH: 58

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 53 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.L Accident avoidance, defensive driving	08.L.01 Defensive driving, introduction	08.L.01(1) The basic notion underlying defensive driving is to not assume that other drivers are sober, alert, and will follow the rules of the road, and to select a speed and position for your vehicle that will allow you to escape a collision if other drivers do not act in a safe manner.	CDH: p. 58
		08.L.01(2) Defensive driving requires that you be alert and constantly anticipating the possibility of a dangerous situation developing around you. It is driving to defend yourself against possible accidents caused by bad or drunk drivers, poor weather, and heavy traffic.	CDH: p. 58
		08.L.01(3) Defensive driving requires efficient management of time and space. Both can be achieved through effective use of advanced driving techniques to achieve the best position for your vehicle in a stream of traffic.	
		08.L.01(4) Drivers in traffic constantly process information to make accurate decisions. They do this through the SIPDE! method (as described in Unit 2): (a) <i>Searching</i> the traffic environment, (b) <i>Identifying</i> important elements such as other vehicles, pedestrians and roadway conditions, (c) <i>Predicting</i> potential hazards in the intended path of travel, such as an intersecting vehicle that does not appear to be slowing, (d) <i>Deciding</i> to adjust vehicle speed and position to compensate for dangers, such as a deep pothole, (e) <i>Executing</i> the maneuvers, for example, by steering around the danger. The SIPDE! method is an effective defensive driving strategy.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 54 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.L.01(5)	It is a mistake to make assumptions about other drivers' intentions, knowledge, and alertness such as: (a) they will not turn if they have not signaled to do so, (b) they will see a vehicle starting to cross the roadway in front of them, and (c) they see and will obey yield signs, signals, and so on. The more you drive, the more you will see that your assumptions will often be incorrect. The best assumption you can make about other drivers is that they will not drive safely.	CDH: p. 58
	08.L.01(6)	Although we expect others to drive in an appropriate manner most of the time, we can't depend on them to always drive as expected. It, therefore, becomes essential to drive defensively and to practice time and space management to protect our passengers and ourselves.	
	08.L.01(7)	You are not driving defensively if you are driving while fatigued, emotionally distressed, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.	
08.L.02	Defensive driving, visual search	08.L.02(1) Part of driving defensively involves good visual search skills: (a) in front of, (b) behind, and (c) to the sides of your vehicle. You should look ahead, scan around your vehicle, and keep your eyes moving while driving so that you can spot hazards more easily.	CDH: 58
		08.L.02(2) Once you have seen the hazard and decided what to do, act. Never "wait and see" and never think that everything will just be all right. Children playing in the street may not see you. The child on the bike may ride in front of you. The person opening the car door may not see you.	CDH: 58

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 55 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.L.02(3) As you look ahead, think about what will (or might) happen on the road. Be alert for vehicles on either side, to the front, and to the rear. Use your mirrors. Leave enough space between you and the vehicle ahead for safe stops. Always leave yourself an "out." Mistakes cause accidents. To protect yourself, know which lanes are clear so you can use them if you need to. This is called keeping an escape route.	CDH: 30
		08.L.02(4) Remember to keep your windshield, windows, and mirrors clean and clear of things which block your view. Make sure to have your seat and mirrors properly adjusted before you start driving to give you the best view, and always wear lenses prescribed to you for driving (as described in Unit 2).	CDH: 32-33
08.L.03	Defensive driving, visual search, looking ahead	08.L.03(1) One visual search skill that you need to drive defensively involves looking ahead and maintaining an adequate visual lead necessary to choose a safe, immediate path of travel. Such a visual lead allows you to make speed or position adjustments well in advance of possible problems. It also allows you to identify alternative paths if an emergency or hazardous situation develops.	
		08.L.03(2) In order to assimilate the potential for a dangerous situation to develop, your visual lead time should be at least 12 to 15 seconds in city driving and may increase to 20 to 30 seconds for higher speed driving. While these lead times may seem long, consider that at 30 miles per hour, a 12 to 15 second lead is 528 to 660 feet, or approximately one block. At freeway speeds, a 12 to 15 second lead would be less than one block ahead of your car, explaining the need for longer sight leads. A driver needs to look that far ahead to see potential hazards early.	CDH: p. 30

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 56 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.L.03(3)	Take in the whole scene while looking ahead; don't just stare at the vehicle in front of you or the middle of the road. Avoid developing a fixed stare by looking beyond the car ahead of you. Constantly keep your eyes moving and scanning the roadway, including the sides of the road.	CDH: 30
	08.L.03(4)	When you look ahead, you will be able to see important things that you can't see later on, such as someone getting into a parked car. This can provide you with information that will help you make decisions as you approach the parked vehicle.	CDH: 30
	08.L.03(5)	Scanning the roadside helps you to see: (a) vehicles and pedestrians that may be in the roadway by the time you reach them, (b) signs warning of potential hazards ahead, and (c) signs giving you directions.	CDH: 30
	08.L.03(6)	Remember to keep your eyes moving. Look near and far. Turn your head before changing lanes to check your blind spots. These blind spots can hide a bicycle, motorcycle, or other vehicle. Watch for things about to happen, like a ball rolling into the street, a car door opening, or a swerving bicycle.	CDH: 30
	08.L.03(7)	On the freeway, be ready for changes in traffic conditions. Watch for signals from other drivers and expect merging vehicles at onramps and interchanges. Be prepared for rapid changes in road conditions and traffic flow.	CDH: 30
	08.L.03(8)	It is important when looking ahead to be aware of the likelihood of changing conditions signaled by (a) pedestrians or bicyclists near roadway, (b) a narrow bridge, (c) road obstructions, (d) changes in road conditions due to construction, ice, water, potholes, etc., and (e) slow moving vehicles.	CDH: p.43

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 57 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.L.04	Defensive driving, visual search, looking behind	08.L.04(1) Another visual search skill required for driving defensively involves checking your mirrors and turning your head to see what is going on behind your vehicle. This will let you know if a vehicle is tailgating you or if a vehicle is coming up behind you too quickly. If so, you may need to get out of the way to avoid being hit from behind.	CDH: p. 32
		08.L.04(2) You should always look behind you before changing lanes, entering a freeway from an onramp, returning to the roadway from the curb or shoulder, slowing down rapidly, or backing up. You should also look behind you before and while you are driving down a long or steep downgrade. Keep a look out for large vehicles, which can gather speed going downhill very quickly.	CDH: p. 32
		08.L.04(3) Remember that there are blind spots located to the sides and rear of your vehicle, and that larger vehicles have more extensive blind areas. It is dangerous to drive in someone else's blind spot because they cannot see you in their mirrors. Don't assume that the other driver will turn his or her head before attempting to merge into your lane. Drive through another driver's blind spot as quickly as you can, or drop back.	CDH: 32, 54
		08.L.04(4) Before changing lanes, you should signal and check traffic behind and beside you. Check all your mirrors first. Then glance over your left or right shoulder to make sure the lane you want to enter is clear of other vehicles. Glancing over your shoulder will tell you if there are vehicles hiding in your blind spot. Always check traffic to the side quickly; do not take your eyes off the road ahead for more than an instant. Check for other cars with their turn signals on. Another driver may plan to move into the same spot that you want to.	CDH: p. 32

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 58 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.L.04(5) When you are going to slow down suddenly, take a quick glance at your rear-view mirrors. For instance, if you are stopping at a red light or because of heavy traffic, you should check for vehicles approaching quickly from the rear so you can brace yourself for a possible rear-end collision. You should also check your mirrors when you are preparing to turn into a side road or driveway, and when you are stopping to pull into a parking space.	CDH: p. 32
		08.L.04(6) Remember that backing up is always dangerous because it is hard to see what is behind your vehicle. Whenever you need to back up or back out of a parking space, you should: (a) check behind your vehicle for children, pets, and objects before you get into your vehicle, (b) turn and look over your right shoulder when backing your vehicle-- look out the back window if possible and do not rely only on your mirrors or looking out a side window, and (c) always back slowly to avoid accidents.	CDH: p. 32
08.L.05	Defensive driving, visual search, looking to the sides	08.L.05(1) The visual search skills required for defensive driving also include scanning to the sides of your vehicle. Any time you come to a place where pedestrians or other vehicles may cross or otherwise enter the roadway, you should quickly look to the sides of your vehicle. You should always look to the sides of your vehicle at intersections, crosswalks, railroad crossings, and where pedestrians are nearby.	CDH: 30
		08.L.05(2) An intersection is any place where one direction of traffic or roadway meets another. In addition to the usual intersections where streets cross, the following are also considered to be intersections: (a) where side streets meet a main roadway, (b) where alleys meet or cross another roadway, (c) freeway entrances, (d) driveway and shopping center entrances.	CDH: 31

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 59 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.L.05(3)	When you come to an intersection, you need to look both ways. Look to the left first, because vehicles approaching from the left are closer to you. Next, look for vehicles and pedestrians coming from the right. Finally, look one more time to the left before you pull out into an intersections, just in case there is a vehicle or pedestrian that you didn't see the first time. Don't forget to also check straight ahead for vehicles making turns.	CDH: 31
	08.L.05(4)	Remember that sometimes other drivers will not obey traffic signals and signs, You should not assume that just because you have a green light or legal right-of-way at a stop sign that other vehicles will not enter the intersection. Always check traffic by looking left, right, left again, and straight ahead before entering an intersection.	CDH: 31
	08.L.05(5)	Make sure that you have a good view of cross traffic before attempting to cross an intersection. If your view of the cross street is blocked by a building, parked cars, or other obstacles, edge forward slowly until you can check cross traffic before proceeding through the intersection.	CDH: 31
	08.L.05(6)	Remember that crosswalks exist at most intersections, whether or not they are marked. Unmarked crosswalks are often found in residential areas. Some crosswalks are in the middle of blocks. Before turning a corner, look to your sides for pedestrians who are crossing the roadway or who are about to cross the roadway. If you have a green light, the chances are that pedestrians crossing an intersection in the same direction as you also have a green light. Don't forget that pedestrians have the right of way in crosswalks.	CDH: 31

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 60 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.L.05(7) Whenever there is a lot of pedestrian activity along the side of the road, there is a good chance that someone will cross or enter the roadway. Therefore, it is very important to look to the sides of your vehicle when you are driving in or near: (a) shopping centers, (b) parking lots, (c) construction sites, (d) busy sidewalks, and (e) playgrounds and schools.	CDH: p. 31
08.L.06	Defensive driving, space cushions	08.L.06(1) Another part of defensive driving is knowing how to avoid potential dangers by positioning your vehicle where you have the best possibility of seeing and being seen by others. The greatest risk of a collision is in front of you. Therefore it is critical that drivers maintain a large enough gap (called following distance) between their car and vehicles ahead in the lane to allow the driver to see beyond the vehicle being followed.	
		08.L.06(2) When another driver makes a mistake, you need time to react. You can give yourself this time by keeping enough space between your car and other vehicles and objects around you. In other words, keep a "space cushion" on all sides of your vehicle. It will give you space to brake or maneuver should you need it in an emergency situation.	CDH: 37
		08.L.06(3) You should never assume that another driver will share space with you.	CDH: 38
08.L.07	Defensive driving, space cushions, ahead	08.L.07(1) Many drivers don't see ahead as well as they should because they follow other vehicles too closely, and the vehicle ahead blocks their view of the road. If you can't see what is going on ahead in your lane, you should either take action to change to a lane or position where you can, or increase the space cushion in front of your vehicle.	CDH: p. 37

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 61 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.L.07(2)	Defensive drivers keep a safe following distance so they can see better. The more space you allow between your vehicle and the one ahead, the more time you will have to see a hazard or accident down the road. You will have more time to stop, turn, or otherwise avoid the hazard.	CDH: p. 37
	08.L.07(3)	Keep enough space between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead so that you will have a bigger picture of what lies down the road. Steering to avoid trouble will be easier. Travel in the center of your lane instead of hugging one side or the other to let you see ahead.	CDH: p. 37
	08.L.07(4)	Most rear-end accidents are caused by following too closely. It is important to keep a sufficient distance behind other cars: (a) so as to be able to stop and maneuver in an emergency, and (b) provide good visibility of the roadway ahead.	CDH: p. 37
	08.L.07(5)	A rule of thumb for a safe following distance under good driving conditions is the "three-second rule." When the vehicle ahead of you passes a certain point, such as a sign or road marking, count "one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three." This takes about three seconds. If you pass the point on the road before you finish counting, you are following too closely. You should adjust your speed so that you do not arrive at the point until after you are finished counting. At faster speeds, the distance should be greater.	CDH: 37
	08.L.07(6)	In normal traffic under good weather conditions a time gap of 3 seconds between you and the car ahead of you works well. For example, at 30 miles per hour you cover 44 feet per second, or about 5 car lengths in two seconds. A 3-second gap allows you to see around the car ahead, to quickly change lanes, or to stop if the car ahead suddenly brakes.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 62 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.L.07(7)	However, if your vision is blocked by a vehicle such as a van, SUV, or large truck which prevents you from observing a collision or blocked lane ahead, you will need to increase your following distance to at least 4 seconds. Adverse roadway or weather conditions such as a rough road, rain, or snow also indicate a need for larger gaps up to 6 seconds or more, to allow you room and time to respond.	
	08.L.07(8)	The 3-second following distance works well if you have to stop suddenly because the driver ahead brakes to a stop. However, at highway speeds, a 3-second following distance will not give you enough time to stop if the road ahead is suddenly blocked by a collision or a vehicle stopped in your lane. For example, at 55 miles per hour, you would need nearly 4 to 5 seconds to stop. Because of this, your position in traffic should be based on the availability of escape routes, which will be discussed later.	
	08.L.07(9)	There are a number of situations where you will need more than a 3-second cushion. Give yourself a "4-second or more" cushion: (a) when you are being tailgated, (b) on slippery roads because you need more room to stop your vehicle, (c) when visibility is reduced, (d) when following motorcycles so as to avoid hitting a fallen cyclist, (e) when the driver behind you wants to pass, you should slow down to allow room in front of your vehicle so the driver will have space to move into, and (f) when pulling a trailer or carrying a heavy load because the extra weight makes it harder to stop.	CDH: p. 37

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 63 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.L.07(10) You should also give yourself a 4-second or more cushion: (a) when following large vehicles that block the view ahead because you need the extra room to see around the vehicle and to the sides, (b) when you encounter a bus, school bus, or vehicle carrying hazardous materials near a railroad track because they must stop at railroad crossings-- you should expect that they will stop and slow down early to allow plenty of room, (c) when merging onto freeways, (d) when following a school bus, and (e) when following drivers that appear to be confused, distracted, or drunk.	CDH: p. 37
08.L.08	Defensive driving, space cushions, behind	08.L.08(1) Defensive driving also requires that you keep a cushion of space behind your vehicle. This space allows you to avoid being involved in a rear-end accident in cases where you need to brake quickly. You should frequently check your rear-view mirrors to determine if you are being tailgated.	CDH: p. 38
		08.L.08(2) If someone is tailgating you, you should slowly increase your following distance (the space cushion in front of your vehicle) to four or more seconds so that if you need to slow down, you can do so gradually. You will be able to avoid braking suddenly and being hit from behind by the tailgater. You should first tap your brake lightly a few times to warn the tailgater that you are slowing down. This will flash your brake lights. Then brake smoothly or decrease your acceleration to increase the distance in front of your vehicle.	CDH: p. 38
		08.L.08(3) Because of the danger involved when you are being tailgated, it is best to lose the tailgater as soon as you can by changing lanes. If you can't change lanes, slow down enough to encourage the tailgater to go around you. If this does not work, pull off the road when it is safe and let the tailgater pass.	CDH: p. 38-39

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 64 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.L.09	Defensive driving, space cushions, to the sides	<p>08.L.09(1) Defensive driving is more than carefully positioning your vehicle in relation to front and rear traffic. It also requires lateral or side positioning. Thus, efficient management of time and space means selecting speeds to position your vehicle between clusters of vehicles to your front and rear, as well as selecting a lane position within groups of traffic to allow the greatest room to maneuver. In other words, also keep a space cushion on each side of your car.</p> <p>08.L.09(2) Don't drive in the blind spot of another driver. The other driver may not see your car and could change lanes and hit you.</p> <p>08.L.09(3) Avoid driving side-by-side with other cars on multilane streets. Someone may crowd your lane or try to change lanes and pull into you. Move ahead of other vehicles, or drop back.</p> <p>08.L.09(4) Keep as much space as you can between yourself and oncoming traffic. On multilane undivided streets, avoid using the lane closest to the center line and oncoming traffic. This will provide you more room to avoid an oncoming car that suddenly swerves toward you. This is particularly important at intersections where another driver could turn left in front of you without giving a signal.</p> <p>08.L.09(5) If possible, make room for vehicles entering your lane on freeways, even though you have the right-of-way. It is the courteous thing to do.</p> <p>08.L.09(6) At freeway exits, don't drive alongside other cars. A driver on the freeway may pull off suddenly or a driver leaving may swerve back on.</p>	<p>CDH: 38</p> <p>CDH: 38</p> <p>CDH: p. 38</p> <p>CDH: p. 38</p> <p>CDH: p. 38</p> <p>CDH: p. 38</p>

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 65 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.L.09(7) Leave space between your vehicle and parked cars, particularly when you are driving on city streets. You should watch for persons exiting their cars on the driver's side, pedestrians who step out between parked cars, and open car doors.	CDH: p. 38
		08.L.09(8) Be careful when riding near bicycles. A bicycle rider could be seriously hurt in an accident. Always leave plenty of room between your car and any bicycle. Watch carefully for bicycles before turning.	CDH: p. 38
08.L.10	Defensive driving, space cushions, avoid multiple hazards	08.L.10(1) It is also necessary to simplify some situations when you are faced with several potential hazards at the same time. The driver's task in such situations is to avoid having to cope with too many hazards at the same time.	CDH: 39
		08.L.10(2) For example, while driving on a narrow, two-lane road, you might identify a pedestrian walking on your side of the road and a truck approaching in the oncoming lane. By adjusting your speed, you can avoid meeting the oncoming truck and passing the pedestrian at the same time. This simplifies the situation by separating one potential hazard from the other and allowing you to take them on one at a time. Slow down and let the truck pass. Then, move to the left to allow plenty of room before you pass the pedestrian.	CDH: 39
08.L.11	Defensive driving, space cushions, splitting the difference	08.L.11(1) Sometimes there will be potential hazards on both sides of the road. For example, there may be parked cars to the right and oncoming cars to the left. In this case, the best thing to do is split the difference between the potential hazards. Steer a middle course between the oncoming and parked cars.	CDH: 39

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 66 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.L.11(2) If one potential hazard is more dangerous than the other, give the most room to the worst danger. For example, if there are oncoming cars to the left of you and a child on a bike to the right, the child poses the most risk because he or she is the most likely to make a sudden move. Therefore, give the child a lot of room to your side, which may mean moving closer to the oncoming vehicles.	CDH: 39
08.L.12	Defensive driving, space cushions, problem drivers and pedestrians	08.L.12(1) There are certain pedestrians and drivers that you should give a lot of room to, such as persons who appear distracted or who cannot see traffic clearly. These persons pose a greater potential hazard, and defensive driving includes giving them additional space.	CDH: 39
		08.L.12(2) Leave an extra cushion of space around your vehicle for drivers who cannot see you. A driver who cannot see you may enter your path without knowing you are there. Drivers whose views may be partially or completely blocked include: (a) drivers at intersections or driveways whose view is blocked by buildings, trees or shrubs, or other vehicles, (b) drivers backing out of driveways or parking spaces, and (c) drivers whose windows are covered with snow, ice, dirt, or mud. You should also leave extra space for pedestrians who may not see you, such as those who are walking with umbrellas or hats over their eyes.	CDH: 39
		08.L.12(3) Leave an extra cushion of space for persons who are likely to be distracted, even if they can see you. These persons include: (a) delivery persons, (b) construction workers, (c) drivers using phones, (d) drivers having conversations with passengers, (e) drivers dealing with children, (f) drivers looking at maps, and (g) children, who will often run into the street without looking first.	CDH: 39

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 67 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.L.12(4)	<p>Leave an extra cushion of space for drivers who may be confused. A person who is confused while driving is very likely to make a move without looking. Drivers who may be confused include: (a) tourists (look for rental cars, for instance), particularly at complicated intersections or freeway interchanges, (b) drivers who slow down for no apparent reason, (c) drivers who appear to be looking at house addresses, and (d) anyone who is driving erratically or who appears to be driving while under the influence or medications, drugs, or alcohol.</p>	CDH: p. 39
	08.L.12(5)	<p>Leave an additional cushion of space for drivers who may be in trouble. If another driver makes a mistake, do what you can to help him or her out. Drivers who may be in trouble include: (a) a driver who is passing you when a curve, hill, or oncoming cars are approaching, (b) a driver that is about to be forced into your lane by a vehicle, pedestrian, bicyclist, an obstruction, or fewer lanes ahead, and (c) a driver who has accidentally made an illegal move such as driving on the shoulder, is stuck in an intersection, or is quickly approaching the end of a merging lane.</p>	CDH: p. 39
08.L.13	Defensive driving, emergency braking and skids	<p>08.L.13(1) Most drivers hit the brakes first to avoid an accident. Sometimes this locks the wheels, unless you have antilock brakes. This, in turn, causes the vehicle to skid, which makes things worse because you lose control of your vehicle. Driving defensively requires that you understand the techniques for stopping in an emergency situation and the techniques for skid avoidance and recovery that were described earlier in this unit.</p>	CDH 58

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 68 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.L.13(2) To stop quickly in an emergency situation use threshold braking. Apply firm, steady pressure on the brake. If the car begins to skid, let up on the brake pedal until the wheels begin to roll again. Then increase the pressure on the brake again, using firm, steady pressure. Repeat this process until the vehicle stops. Remember that you should never pump antilock brakes. Simply apply firm, steady pressure until the vehicle stops. As long as you do not go into a skid while emergency braking you will still be able to maneuver your car. Try to steer your vehicle away from hard objects such as other vehicles, abutments, and trees while you are braking in an emergency situation.	CDH 58
08.L.14	Defensive driving, escape routes and techniques	08.L.14(1) Keeping an "escape route" is when you position your vehicle so that you have an alternative path of travel to avoid a collision should conditions change rapidly. Defensive drivers always leave themselves an "out" or escape route in case of an emergency.	
		08.L.14(2) Escape routes are nothing more than possible alternate paths of travel. As you drive, identify an immediate path of travel. This is where you want your car to be 4 to 5 seconds from now, based on existing road and traffic conditions.	
		08.L.14(3) You also need to identify an alternative path of travel where you would place your car if your immediate path of travel were suddenly blocked. This 4-to 5-second gap, like a 3-second following distance, is determined by counting. Simply pick a point ahead and count "one-thousand one, one-thousand two, one-thousand three, one-thousand four, one-thousand five."	
		08.L.14(4) To insure that you have an escape route when driving in traffic, select a speed which places your vehicle between rather than inside clusters of other vehicles.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 69 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.L.14(5)	If you are in a cluster of vehicles, maintain a cushion of space around your entire vehicle. Remember that the purpose of this space is to give you additional time to see and react to potential hazards.	
	08.L.14(6)	Avoid encountering a situation that involves multiple hazards by (a) identifying hazards early, (b) predicting potential hazards, (c) adjusting your speed and position , and (d) creating escape routes.	
	08.L.14(7)	Remember that there are three things you can do to avoid an accident in an emergency situation: (a) stop, (b) turn, and (c) speed up. While stopping or speeding up, you can also use turning to avoid a collision, if you use threshold braking to avoid locking your brakes.	CDH: 58
	08.L.14(8)	Stopping is not always the safest maneuver in an emergency situation. However, if you are going to stop quickly, you should understand how to avoid skids as was described earlier in this unit.	CDH: 58
	08.L.14(9)	If you do not have time to stop safely in an emergency situation, you should try turning or steering your vehicle away from the hazard. You can try running off the roadway (but not into oncoming traffic) if you have to and if there is room. Running off the road is usually a better option than hitting another vehicle, particularly head-on. If you are going to brake while you turn, make sure to not lock your wheels (if you have don't have antilock brakes).	CDH: 58

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 70 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.L.14(10) Although it may not seem intuitive, sometimes you can speed up to avoid an accident. This may work if a vehicle is going to hit you from the side or the rear. For example, if you are crossing an uncontrolled intersection and you notice a vehicle approaching at a high speed from the side, you should quickly speed up to avoid being hit from the side.	CDH: 58
		08.L.14(11) If you absolutely cannot avoid an accident, you should know how to protect yourself as well as you can. This is discussed later in this unit.	CDH: 58
08.L.15	Defensive driving, equipment use, introduction	08.L.15(1) Defensive driving also entails using your vehicle equipment properly and knowing how and when to use your vehicle equipment to avoid an accident.	CDH: 35
		08.L.15(2) Examples already given in this unit were to flash your brake lights to warn a tailgater that you will be slowing, to use your emergency flashers when you are broken-down in traffic or on the side of the road, and to use your headlights any time you have trouble seeing other vehicles or they will have trouble seeing you.	
08.L.16	Defensive driving, equipment use, horn and lights	08.L.16(1) Your horn and headlights are effective tools that you can use to avoid a collision with another vehicle, pedestrian, or animal.	
		08.L.16(2) You should sound your horn or flash your lights when it will help to avoid an accident by alerting another driver to your presence. For example, although you should first try to get eye contact with other drivers, sometimes it may be necessary to tap your horn to alert another driver who may not see you when it appears that he or she may accidentally cut you off.	CDH: p. 35

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 71 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.L.16(3) It is safer to use your brakes than to use your horn. You should never use your horn if slowing or stopping your car will prevent an accident.	CDH: p. 35
		08.L.16(4) On narrow mountain roads, drive as far to the right as possible and sound your horn when you cannot see at least 200 feet ahead due to curves, hills, weather, or other obstacles.	CDH: p. 35
		08.L.16(5) You should only use your horn to avoid an accident. Do not honk your horn: (a) because someone is driving or walking slower than you would like, (b) to chastise other drivers who have made a mistake, or (c) because you are angry.	CDH: p. 35
		08.L.16(6) You may also legally flash your headlights under certain circumstances to get the attention of another driver who may not see you.	CDH: 35
08.L.17	Defensive driving, equipment use, emergency flashers	08.L.17(1) In addition to breakdowns, you should use your emergency flashers to warn other drivers of a hazard or accident on the road ahead that will require them to slow or stop.	CDH: 36
08.L.18	Defensive driving, equipment use, turn signals	08.L.18(1) You should use your turn signals any time you change direction. Signaling lets other drivers know what your intentions are. You should always watch for other drivers' turn signals too. Use your turn signals even when you don't see any other vehicles around. A vehicle you don't see might hit you.	CDH: 36
		08.L.18(2) Always use your turn signals when pulling next to or away from a curb, or whenever you are entering traffic from a stop or driveway.	CDH: 36

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 72 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.L.18(3)	Use your turn signals before turning or changing lanes. On the freeway, you should signal at least 5 seconds before changing lanes. If your signal lights are not working, you may use arm signals.	
	08.L.18(4)	Just because you use your turn signal, you should not automatically assume that the space you wish to occupy is clear or that other drivers will make room for you. Always look over your shoulder and check your blind spot before making a lane change.	
	08.L.18(5)	Signal continuously during the last 100 feet before turning.	
	08.L.18(6)	If you plan to turn beyond an intersection, don't signal until you are actually in the intersection. If you signal too early, another driver may think you will turn before you reach him or her and might pull into your path.	
	08.L.18(7)	If you plan to turn at an intersection which is close to another side road or business driveway, be especially careful. If you signal too early, drivers leaving the side road or driveway may think you are turning before the intersection and pull out in front of you. It would be better to signal after the driveway, but before the intersection.	
	08.L.18(8)	Remember to check your signal after turning, pulling into traffic, or changing lanes. Turn it off if it hasn't done so automatically.	
	08.L.18(9)	On sunny days, signal lights may be hard to see. If the sun is bright, it is a good idea to use arms signals in addition to your signal lights.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 73 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.L.19	Defensive driving, equipment use, brake lights	08.L.19(1) If you see a hazard or accident ahead that will require other drivers to slow or stop quickly, you can warn them by tapping your brake pedal three or four times as a warning. You can also use the hand signal for slowing or stopping.	
		08.L.19(2) When you need to slow down, you should start braking early to warn other vehicles behind you. Avoid making last minute or sudden stops as you risk being rear-ended by other vehicles.	
08.L.20	Defensive driving, adjusting speed, introduction	08.L.20(1) Defensive driving means that you need to be flexible in selecting a speed which is neither too fast or nor too slow and which is appropriate for the traffic conditions.	
		08.L.20(2) Speed limits are set for the type of road and the traffic in a given area. All speed limits are based on ideal driving conditions (e.g., good weather, no traffic, during the day, etc.).	CDH: 18
		08.L.20(3) California's Basic Speed Law says that you must never drive faster than is safe for current conditions, regardless of the posted speed limit. However, you also may never legally drive faster than the posted speed limit and can be cited for blocking the reasonable and normal movement of traffic for driving too slowly.	CDH: 54, 18 CVC: 22348, 22350, 22400
		08.L.20(4) Accidents will tend to happen when one driver is going faster or slower than other vehicles on the road. It is best to choose a speed that is consistent with other traffic. In other words, when choosing a speed, you should go with the flow.	CDH: 55
08.L.21	Defensive driving, adjusting speed, driving too fast	08.L.21(1) High speed increases your stopping distance. The faster you drive, the less time you have to avoid a hazard or accident. As was described in Unit 3, the force of a 60 MPH crash isn't just twice as great as at 30 MPH, it's four times as great.	CDH: 18
		08.L.21(2) Studies have shown that speeding does not save more than a few minutes in an hour's driving.	CDH: 55

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 74 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.L.21(3)	No matter what the speed limit sign may say, you should adjust your speed depending on: (a) the number and speed of other cars on the road, (b) whether the road surface is smooth, rough, graveled, wet, dry, wide, or narrow, (c) whether there are pedestrians or bicyclists near the roadway, and (d) the amount of rain, fog, snow, ice, wind, or dust. For example, you could be cited for driving 45 MPH in a 55 MPH speed zone if dense fog, traffic, or other conditions require that you drive even slower to be driving safely.	CDH: 54
	08.L.21(4)	In addition to driving slower when the weather is poor, you should also drive slower when there are many vehicles close together on the roadway (i.e., traffic). Stopping safely is harder in traffic because you have less room to do so. Drive slower so you can stop in the distance you have in front of your vehicle.	CDH: 55
	08.L.21(5)	You should drive more slowly: (a) in shopping centers, (b) in parking lots, (c) in downtown areas, (d) on roads with heavy traffic, (e) when you see brake lights coming on several vehicles ahead, (f) on narrow bridges, (g) in narrow tunnels, (h) near toll plazas, (i) near schools and playgrounds, and (j) on residential streets.	CDH: 55
	08.L.21(6)	If you are going faster than traffic, you will have to keep passing other cars. Each time you pass another car there is more risk of an accident. The car you pass may change lanes suddenly. The few minutes sooner that you would reach your destination by speeding is not worth much if you are injured or dead.	CDH: 55
	08.L.21(7)	On two-lane roads, an oncoming car may appear suddenly while you are passing other vehicles. Although the risk from passing other vehicles may not be large, the total risk adds up if you are passing multiple times.	CDH: 55

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 75 of 88

Section	Issue		Learning Objective	References
08.M Accident avoidance, specific types of collisions	08.L.22 Defensive driving, adjusting speed, driving too slow	08.L.22(1)	Going slower than other vehicles or stopping all of a sudden can be just as dangerous as speeding. Driving slower also tends to make other vehicles bunch up behind you and it could cause a rear-end collision.	CDH: 55
		08.L.22(2)	If many cars are pulling out to pass you, maybe you should increase your speed to the speed limit or move over into the right lane.	CDH: 55
		08.L.22(3)	If you are driving slower than other traffic on the freeway, you should use the rightmost lane(s). Do not drive in the leftmost fast lane. If you are in the leftmost lane and another driver wishes to pass you from behind, move into the right lane.	CDH: 18
	08.M.01 Specific types of collisions, introduction	08.M.01(1)	The key to avoiding all types of accidents is to drive defensively. However, certain defensive driving techniques are useful for avoiding front and rear-end collisions in particular.	
	08.M.02 Specific types of collisions, vehicles ahead	08.M.02(1)	To avoid colliding with vehicles ahead of you, it is important to choose the correct lane in terms of your intended path and traffic conditions, and not do so at the last moment.	
		08.M.02(2)	To avoid colliding with vehicles ahead of you, you should increase the cushion of space in front of your vehicle (following distance) when: (a) you are being tailgated, (b) your vision is blocked, (c) visibility is poor, (d) when you increase your speed, and (e) when adverse roadway, traffic, or weather conditions exist.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 76 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.M.03	Specific types of collisions, vehicles behind	08.M.02(3) To avoid colliding with vehicles ahead of you, minimize the danger of being distracted from the roadway by: (a) not allowing distracting conditions to exist inside the car, (b) taking only short looks away from the roadway, and (c) having a passenger read maps and do other non-driving tasks.	
		08.M.02(4) To avoid colliding with vehicles ahead of you, look ahead for trouble by: (a) looking over and around the vehicle ahead, (b) lowering your speed when approaching hilltops or curves, (c) being aware of brake lights in adjacent lanes and ahead in your lane, and (d) starting to decelerate early and smoothly to warn other drivers behind you.	
		08.M.02(5) To avoid colliding with vehicles ahead of you, you should be especially careful while driving: (a) near controlled intersections, (b) near crosswalks, (c) in lanes which travel next to parked cars, (d) at parking lot entrances, (e) near freeway interchanges where cars enter and exit, (f) on slippery or ice covered streets, and (g) near where children are playing.	
		08.M.03(1) The most frequent causes of rear-end accidents are not paying attention while driving, excessive speed, and tailgating.	
		08.M.03(2) To avoid being rear ended by another driver: (a) keep a 3 or more second following distance from vehicles ahead, (b) signal early for turns, stops, and lane changes, (c) brake smoothly and gradually--do not stop abruptly or slam on your brakes, (d) keep pace with traffic when possible and legal, (e) frequently check your rear-view mirrors to see if you are being tailgated and take appropriate action if you are, (f) check over your shoulder to insure you have space before changing lanes, (g) keep your brake pedal depressed even after stopping, and (h) keep rear lights clean and functioning.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 77 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.M.03(3) When you follow too closely and another driver cuts in front of you, the normal reaction is to slam on your brakes or swerve into another lane. Both of these maneuvers are dangerous in traffic. Swerving out of the way most often results in cutting someone else off. It might also result in the vehicle behind you crashing into you or other vehicles around you. Slamming on your brakes can result in a locked-wheel skid, which is always dangerous. Make sure to keep a large enough space cushion in front of your vehicle so that you will be able to stop quickly in an emergency situation without slamming on your brakes.	CDH: 38
		08.M.03(4) If another driver cuts in front of you, it is better to just take your foot off of the gas. This will give you space between your car and the other vehicle without swerving into another lane or risking a skid. Don't overreact if you are cut off. Plan your emergency escape route before an emergency happens. This will help you to avoid being rear-ended.	CDH: 38
08.N Protecting yourself in an unavoidable accident	08.N.01 Protecting yourself in an unavoidable accident	08.N.01(1) Sometimes there is nothing you can do to avoid a collision. In these cases, there are actions you can take to minimize your injury and the injury to others. Remember that the best protection you have is to always wear your seat belt.	
		08.N.01(2) If you are about to be hit from the front: (a) use your arms and hands to protect your face if you are wearing a seat belt with a shoulder strap, (b) throw yourself across the seats so that you do not hit the steering wheel column or dashboard if you are not wearing a seatbelt with a shoulder strap.	CDH: p. 58
		08.N.01(3) If you are about to be hit from the side, brace yourself with the steering wheel to keep yourself from being thrown against the side of the vehicle.	CDH: p. 58

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 78 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.N.01(4) If you are about to be hit from the rear, you should: (a) keep your body pressed against your seat and your head pressed against your headrest to minimize whiplash, and (b) be ready to brake after impact so that you won't be pushed into vehicles and other objects in front of you by the force of the collision. Keeping your foot on the brake pedal during impact is likely to result in shattered bones in your leg.	CDH: p. 58
08.O Procedures when involved in an accident	08.O.01 Accidents, stopping requirements after	08.O.01(1) You must try to remain calm when you are involved in an accident. Do not argue or fight with other persons involved or with emergency personnel. Other persons may be in shock or pain.	
		08.O.01(2) If you are involved in an accident, you are legally required to stop your vehicle and give assistance. Someone could be injured or need your help. You are also required to stay at the scene and provide information to other persons involved and to law enforcement, if applicable.	CVC: 20001-20002
		08.O.01(3) Not stopping if you are involved in an accident where there are injuries to others or property damage is called "hit and run" driving. This can result in 1 year of jail time and a fine of up to \$10,000. If you fail you stop at an accident that results in death or permanent, serious injury, it can result in imprisonment for up to 4 years and a \$10,000 fine. Subsequent hit-and-run convictions result in a mandatory 5-year prison term.	CDH: 59 CVC: 20001
	08.O.02 Accidents, calling for help and moving injured parties	08.O.02(1) Check to see if you, your passengers, and other persons involved in the accident are injured. You should see that help is called if a person is injured-- call the police or CHP using 911.	CDH: p. 59 VC: 20003

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 79 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.O.02(2) You are required by law to render reasonable assistance to any person injured in an accident in which you are involved. This includes transporting, or making arrangements for transporting, any injured person to a physician, surgeon, or hospital for medical or surgical treatment if it is apparent that treatment is necessary or if transportation is requested by any injured person.	CVC: 20003
		08.O.02(3) While first-aid for bleeding and shock is appropriate, moving an injured person may cause additional, more severe injuries. Only move an injured person when not doing so puts them in a life-threatening situation, such as being burned in a fire, being hit by another vehicle, or drowning.	
		08.O.02(4) If you think you might be injured, you should seek medical attention. Some injuries do not become apparent until after the shock of the accident wears off.	
08.O.03	Accidents, preventing further damage	08.O.03(1) If you are stopped on the roadway, turn on your emergency flashers. You should use flares or reflective triangles to warn other drivers, if you have them.	
		08.O.03(2) To reduce the chances of a fire, turn off your ignition. If fuel is leaking from your vehicle, stay back-- it may catch on fire.	
		08.O.03(3) If you are involved in an accident resulting in only property damage (including vehicles), if possible, you should move your vehicle off the main lanes of the roadway to a safe location within the immediate vicinity of the accident unless it would cause an injury to any person.	CVC: 20002

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 80 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.O.04	Accidents, reporting of	08.O.04(1) If you are involved in an accident in which someone is killed or injured (no matter how slightly) or if there is more than \$500 in property damage, you must report the accident to DMV within 10 days on a Traffic Accident Report form SR 1, which is available from any DMV or CHP office.	VC: 16000 CDH: p. 60-61
		08.O.04(2) An accident report can be filed for you with DMV by your insurance company, but you are held responsible if they fail to do so. You are better off filing the report yourself than risking the penalty of not reporting the accident to DMV.	VC: 16025 CDH: p. 61
		08.O.04(3) The accident report required of you is not filed by the police or CHP even though a police report may be prepared at the scene. Law enforcement officers, if they come to the scene of an accident, will probably file a law enforcement report, not the accident report that is required of you by law to be filed with the DMV.	CDH: p. 61
		08.O.04(4) A report is required by each driver involved in the accident, regardless of who caused it, and even if it occurred on private property.	CVC: 16000.1 CDH: p. 61
		08.O.04(5) If you are involved in an accident in which someone is killed or injured, you must also report the accident to the police or CHP within 24 hours. This is in addition to the report required to be filed with DMV.	CDH: p. 60 CVC: 20008
		08.O.04(6) If you are unable to report an accident due to injury, your passengers (if any) are required to file the report and provide information to law enforcement and other persons involved in the accident.	CVC: 16003, 20010

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 81 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.O.04(7) Your license will be suspended for failing, refusing, or neglecting to report an accident in which there is more than \$500 worth of property damage, an injury, or death.	16004, 16072
		08.O.04(8) You are required to provide accurate information to law enforcement.	
08.O.05	Accidents, duty to provide information	08.O.05(1) If you are involved in an accident you must provide to other persons involved (and the police, if applicable): (a) your driver license number, (b) your vehicle registration card, (c) evidence of financial responsibility including the name and address of your insurance company and policy number, and (d) your correct address.	CDH: p. 59 CVC: 16025, 20002, 20003, 20004
		08.O.05(2) If someone is injured or killed, passengers must also show identification to other persons involved and to law enforcement.	CVC: 20003
		08.O.05(3) If there are witnesses to the accident, you should obtain their names, addresses, and phone numbers. You should also record damage to your vehicle and injuries. It is a good idea to keep a camera in your vehicle for recording damage to all vehicles involved.	
		08.O.05(4) If you damage someone's property, such as when your vehicle rolls into a parked car or you hit a tree or sign post, you are required to: (a) try to find owner or driver, (b) leave a note with your name and address and that of the owner of the car you are driving in a conspicuous place, and (c) report the accident to law enforcement. If you locate the owner of the vehicle or other property, you are required to present the same information (driver license, financial responsibility, etc.) as in any other accident.	CDH: 60 VC: 16025, 16001, 20002

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 82 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.O.05(5) Failure to provide the required information at the scene of an accident or leave a note with the required information is a misdemeanor and may result in 6 months in jail and a \$1,000 fine.	CVC: 20002
		08.O.05(6) Your license will be revoked for failing to stop at the scene of, or to provide information for, an accident resulting in injury or death to any person.	CVC: 13350, 13351, 20001, CDH: 72
		08.O.05(7) Your license will be suspended for being unable to show proof of financial responsibility when involved in an accident.	CVC: 16070
	08.O.06 Accidents, animals	08.O.06(1) If you accidentally kill or injure an animal: (a) pull over to the side of the road and stop, and (b) try to locate the owner. If you cannot locate the owner, call the humane society or law enforcement. You should never just leave an injured animal to die, nor should you try to move or otherwise touch an injured animal.	CDH: 60
	08.O.07 Accidents, moving vehicles afterwards	08.O.07(1) If the damage to your vehicle makes it undriveable, you should have it moved off the roadway. In most cases, damaged vehicles will be towed if they are left on the side of the road for an extended period of time. This can be more expensive because you will probably have to pay storage fees in addition to regular towing fees. It is best to take care of having your vehicle towed while you are at the accident scene.	
08.P Accidents and emergency scenes, when you are not involved	08.P.01 Accidents and emergency scenes, not involved	08.P.01(1) Hazard lights ahead indicate a possible accident or emergency. You should slow down and pass carefully or stop if assistance is needed.	CDH: 59

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 83 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
	08.P.01(2)	It is wise to respond to radio reports of accidents, dangerous conditions, or roadwork by changing your route. If you cannot change your route, you should be alert and ready to slow or stop. Radio or news reports of accidents or roadwork often refer to numbered traffic lanes. The leftmost or "fast" lane is called the #1 lane. The lanes to the right of the #1 lane are called the #2 lane, then the #3 lane, and so forth.	CDH: 59
	08.P.01(3)	You should never purposefully drive to the scene of an accident, fire, or other emergency scene just to see what is happening. You may block the way for law enforcement, fire persons, and ambulances. You can be arrested for driving to the scene of an accident just to look.	CDH: 59
	08.P.01(4)	It is wise to avoid driving near accidents. You should change your route and take another road, if possible. Injured persons are able to be helped faster if other vehicles are not blocking the roadway.	CDH: 59
	08.P.01(5)	If you must drive near an accident or emergency scene, do not slow down just to see what is going on. You may cause another crash and will cause traffic congestion. Slowing or stopping to look at an accident scene, except to help, is called "rubbernecking," and is illegal. However, you should drive by carefully and watch for people entering the roadway.	CDH: 52, 59
	08.P.01(6)	You should never drive over an unprotected fire hose at an accident or other emergency scene. Wait for instructions from emergency personnel if a fire hose crosses the roadway.	CDH: 59
	08.P.01(7)	You must obey orders given by emergency personnel even if you must ignore normal traffic laws or signs to do so.	CDH: 59

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention Page 84 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.Q Financial responsibility	08.Q.01 Financial responsibility, insurance, purpose	08.Q.01(1) The purpose of insurance is to insure that you will be able to pay (financially responsible) for injuries and damages if you are involved in an accident.	CVC: 16020, 16021, 16025, 16001, 20002 CDH: 60
		08.Q.01(2) California has a compulsory financial responsibility law which requires that every driver and every owner of a motor vehicle maintain financial responsibility at all times.	CVC: 16020, 16021
		08.Q.01(3) There are four forms of financial responsibility: (a) coverage by a motor vehicle or automobile liability insurance policy, (b) a deposit of \$35,000 with DMV, (c) a surety bond for \$35,000 obtained from a company licensed to do business in California, and (d) a DMV-issued self-insurance certificate.	CDH: 60 CVC: 16020, 16021, 16051, 16052, 16053, 16054, 16055, 16056
		08.Q.01(4) You must carry written evidence of insurance or other financial responsibility for your vehicle whenever you drive. There are minimum amounts of insurance that you must have. You must present your evidence of financial responsibility to other persons with whom you are involved in an accident and at the request of law enforcement.	CVC: 16000, 16020, 16021, 16028, 16430, 16050.5 CDH: 60-61
	08.Q.02 Financial responsibility, insurance, types	08.Q.02(1) There are at least four different types of insurance: (a) collision, (b) comprehensive, (c) liability, and (d) uninsured motorist. You should understand the differences between them for when it is time for you to purchase insurance for your own vehicle.	

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 85 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.Q.02(2) Collision insurance deals with damage to your vehicle in the event of a collision. This type of insurance is normally subject to a deductible, meaning that you have to pay a certain amount for damage to your vehicle before your insurance company will pay. Collision insurance policies are limited by various terms indicated in the policy.	
		08.Q.02(3) Comprehensive insurance deals with theft of your vehicle or damage to your vehicle caused by factors other than a collision such as a rock hitting your windshield. Comprehensive policies are also normally subject to a deductible, and are limited by various terms in the policy.	
		08.Q.02(4) Liability insurance addresses your responsibility to others for injury, death, and property damage. This is the type of insurance that you are required to have by law. Liability policies are also limited by terms in the policy.	
		08.Q.02(5) Uninsured motorist insurance addresses medical expenses that you or your passengers may incur when in an accident that is not your fault and is caused by another driver who does not have insurance.	
08.Q.03	Financial responsibility, required coverage	08.Q.03(1) Your financial responsibility for accidents may be addressed: (a) through an insurance policy issued by a company licensed to do business in California with minimum liability coverage of \$15,000 for a single death or injury, \$30,000 for death or injury to more than one person, and \$5,000 property damage, (b) by a \$35,000 deposit with DMV, (c) using a \$35,000 surety bond, or (d) by having a DMV-issued self-insurance certificate.	VC: 16056

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.Q.04	Financial responsibility, insurance, dangers of being underinsured	08.Q.04(2) Before you purchase insurance, make sure that the agent/broker and insurer you select are licensed by the California Department of Insurance. Call 1-800-927-HELP to determine the license status and obtain additional information.	
		08.Q.04(1) If you do not have enough insurance (i.e., you are underinsured) and are involved in an accident, other persons involved could bring a judgment against your assets. In other words, they can sue you for damages not covered by your insurance policy.	
		08.Q.04(2) Most drivers choose to have an automobile liability policy as proof of financial responsibility. If you have an accident not covered by your insurance, your license will be suspended. If the driver is not identified, the owner of the motor vehicle will have his or her license suspended.	CH: 60-61
		08.Q.04(3) Your license will be suspended for failing to pay for property damage in excess of \$500 or for damages resulting from injury or death which resulted from a motor vehicle, if a certified copy of a judgment is received from a small claims court.	CVC: 16370, 16381, 16370.5
		08.Q.04(4) As the owner of a vehicle, you are responsible for damages in the event of an accident in which someone else is driving if they have your express or implied permission to drive the vehicle. The person signing a minor's license application assumes liability for damages caused by the minor regardless of whose vehicle he or she is driving.	CVC: 20000, 17700 CDH: p. 62
		08.Q.04(5) Many lawsuits resulting from accidents settle for much more money than the minimum amounts set by the financial responsibility law. You may have to pay the extra money if your insurance does not pay it all.	CDH: 61

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 87 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
08.Q.05	Financial responsibility, failure to provide proof	08.Q.05(1) Your license can be suspended for failing to have or provide proof of insurance. It is illegal to drive without being financially responsible.	VC: 16070
		08.Q.05(2) If you don't have evidence of financial responsibility to show law enforcement when you are stopped for a citation or after an accident, you may have to pay a fine of up to \$500 plus penalty assessments, and your vehicle may be impounded.	CDH: 60
		08.Q.05(3) If you do not have acceptable financial responsibility and you have an accident, you may lose your license for up to 4 years.	CDH: 60
		08.Q.05(4) Presenting false evidence of financial responsibility, including an expired or canceled insurance policy, bond, certificate of self-insurance, or assignment of deposit letter is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$750 and 30 days of jail time.	CVC: 16030
		08.Q.05(5) The evidence of financial responsibility that you present to DMV to register your vehicle or in the event of an accident or other traffic stop is reviewed. DMV may ask the insurance company or other entity to verify that you do indeed have coverage, particularly at the time of an accident. If you did not actually have the proper insurance coverage, your driving privilege will be suspended for 1 year. To get your license back, you will need to provide evidence of financial responsibility and maintain it for the next 3 years.	CDH: 61-62
08.Q.06	Financial responsibility, accidents and minors	08.Q.06(1) If you are under 18 years of age, your parents must sign your license application. Your parents, or any other persons who sign for your driver license, accept liability up to \$35,000 for any one accident that you are involved in.	CDH: 62

Unit 8: Accidents: Causes and Prevention

Page 88 of 88

Section	Issue	Learning Objective	References
		08.Q.06(2) This assumption of your liability may be voided when the person who signed for your license notifies DMV to have your license canceled. Your parent's or guardian's liability also ceases when you reach age 18.	CDH: 62
		08.Q.06(3) If you are involved in an accident, you may be liable for civil damages. If the accident involved a law violation, then you may also be fined.	CDH: 62
		08.Q.06(4) Your parents are responsible if you are under 18 and drive without a license. You may not even drive minibikes, scooters, or mopeds on public property (roads or sidewalks) without a driver license.	CDH: 62
08.Q.07	Financial responsibility, automobile registration	08.Q.07(1) A vehicle cannot be registered or have its registration renewed without evidence of financial responsibility.	VC: 4000.37
08.Q.08	Accidents, Negligent Operator (Neg Op) Program	08.Q.08(1) Recall from Unit 5 that the DMV keeps a public record of all at-fault accidents and assigns point counts to these occurrences for the purpose of alerting drivers when they are in danger of being classified as a Negligent Operator of a motor vehicle. If you obtain too many points on your record, your license may be suspended or revoked.	CVC: 12810 CDH: p. 69